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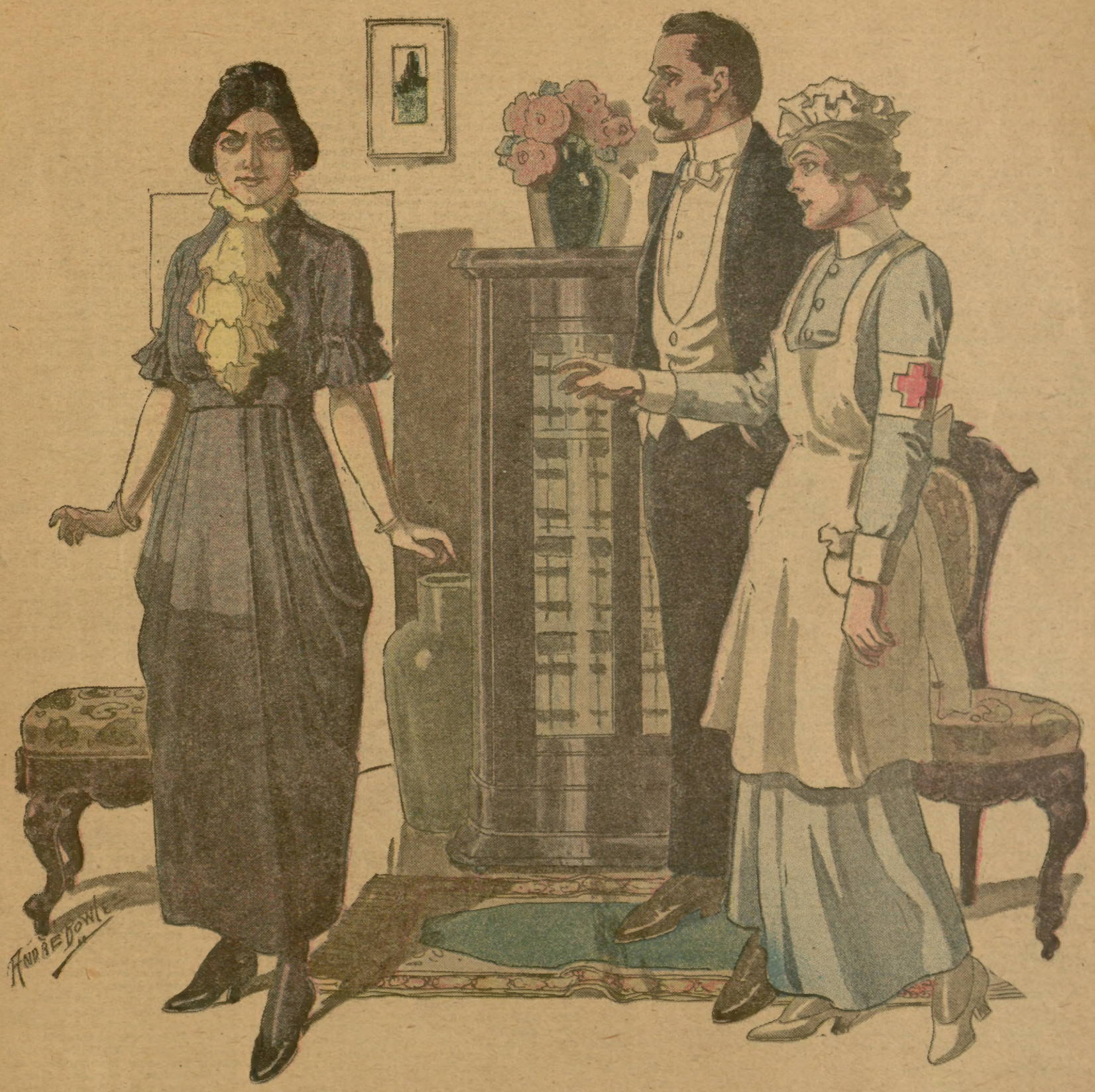

HER DUAL LIFE

-:- Or -:-

The Hidden Lodge

By Ella Martin

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THE PROLOG.

THE Lodge, built long ago among stately trees on the banks of the Hudson, by some sportsman of wealth and leisure, was now surrounded by a dense growth of underbrush that completely hid it from view of any one passing along the highway. The road turning into the unkempt grounds was so overgrown with sod and embedded with leaves as to be hardly discernible to a casual observer. No one now living in that vicinity knew who had owned Hidden Lodge, and few people ever went near the place.

And yet, the Lodge had an occupant—a recent one, to be sure. The fact had been discovered by a lone hunter who had become lost in the forest near by. After traveling in a circle until darkness overtook him, he discovered lights twinkling among the trees, and making his way to the building stopped to inquire the way to the nearest railway station.

A servant had answered his knock, but glancing into the room beyond he caught sight of a beautiful woman standing beside an old-fashioned fireplace. She was leaning one elbow on the mantelpiece, her head, with its purplish-black hair, resting in the palm of her hand. Her skin was white with rich coloring in cheeks and lips. He could only imagine the suppressed fire smoldering in her eyes, as the woman did not glance in his direction. She was dressed in a flimsy black garment that gave her a stately appearance. Somehow in that moment he was impressed with the idea that she was of Italian birth.

He had only that one fleeting glance, for the servant, before answering his inquiry, closed the door leading from the hall into the living-room. He went away after receiving meager directions concerning the way out of this labyrinth of brush and tangled vines, and finally reached the highway.

He noticed that the house had been recently repaired, and that there was a small lawn with flower-beds in the rear of the building. Never having heard of its presence there among the wooded growth, nearly opposite the great man-

sion that stood on an elevation on the other side of the road, he went away wondering.

When he reached the town and told of the building being inhabited, there were few who believed his story. He was a stranger and they did not tell him his word was doubted. They merely lifted their eyebrows, shrugged their shoulders and said little.

But later circumstances arose that brought Hidden Lodge to the notice of the public. And detectives were wont to watch the place—but in vain, for a long time, it may be said. Then things began to happen.

CHAPTER I.

THE GRADUATE NURSE.

ON A QUIET street in Philadelphia lived Miss Milston, a maiden lady, whom everybody called Aunt Saphronia. The house, which had come to her by inheritance, was large and old-styled; its atmosphere was that of primness. On the parlor floor was a large-flowered carpet, and a canary swung in its cage in the depths of a sunny bay-window. On the center-table was a glass case containing a nosegay of wax flowers. Beside it lay the family album.

In a high-backed rocker Miss Milston sat waiting, her tall, spare figure clad in a spotless house gown, her eager eyes watching the street. Suddenly she started to her feet as a taxicab drove up beside the shaded walk, and ran down the steps with the agility of a younger woman. Her niece, Helen Milston, whom she had reared as her own child, alighted from the taxi, and the two greeted each other warmly. After unloading her baggage and dismissing the driver the two went up the walk together. Helen, who had just graduated as a nurse in a New York hospital, was a plump young woman of medium height, with a smiling countenance, bright, dark-blue eyes and brown hair.

"Oh," she exclaimed, as they entered the parlor, and she glanced around appreciatively, "how cozy and homelike it all is, after three years spent in a hospital, with its bare walls and polished floors and its long corridors. I am so glad to be home—if it is only for a few weeks," she added.

She removed her hat, which she deposited on the hall tree, and then seated herself in the old-fashioned rocker that had sat in just that same place by the center-table when she went away to become a trained nurse.

"And yet, you like nurse work, I suppose?" said her aunt, inquiringly.

"Oh, yes, Aunt Saphronia, I like being a nurse. I knew I should before I learned. It is a great work, to be able to alleviate suffering. There is lots of responsibility about it, but the pay is good. And you know I have to make my way in the world."

"Not necessarily. I have enough for both, Helen," Aunt Saphronia said, looking at the girl with kindly eyes. "All I have will be yours when I am gone."

"Which won't be for years and years, I hope, dear aunt. And I'd like nothing better than to stay right here with you, if I didn't realize I ought to have a career. One should do something to help the world along. And I don't have to nurse in hospitals, now that I have finished my course. I have already taken a case in a private house; and somehow I feel that it is going to be something of an adventure, for it is in such mysterious surroundings. I have forgotten the name of the place, but I have the address in my bag. It is in New York somewhere; above Yonkers, I think."

Aunt Saphronia, who was seated on the edge of the horsehair sofa, a relic of her girlhood days, did not speak for a moment, but regarded her niece gravely. The girl was so full of exuberance of spirits that she was loath to express her forebodings. Helen must be permitted to learn from experience that life is not always as one has pictured it.

"I hope," sighed her aunt, "that you will marry before many years, and not continue to drag out your life in nurse work."

Helen laughed, as she rocked to and fro. She looked so cool and fresh in her airy summer gown, tho the day was rather warm. She brushed a stray lock of hair from her brow in an effort to hide the flush that suffused her cheeks.

"I don't know any one to marry—yet. I think I shall remain single, as so many of this city's inhabitants have done. Are there as many old maids here as formerly?"

"There is one that I know of," Miss Milston replied, laughing.

"Oh, I wasn't thinking of you!" Helen cried, joining in the laughter. "You have grown into a maiden lady so gracefully, and have kept so kind and pleasant in spite of it, that you don't count. And even Philadelphia has bachelor girls instead of old maids now, I suppose."

"Oh, yes, among the younger generation. We old maids, as a class, will eventually become extinct, along with the old soldiers, I expect. You would better remain with me until your old beau returns from the West."

"He's already back," replied Helen, quickly. "Neil has been to see me at the hospital, and we've parted for good this time. We couldn't get along together and we have agreed to disagree.

"I must go on this case, Aunt Saphronia," she went on, changing the subject before her aunt could question her, for Neil Graham had been a great favorite with her aunt in days gone by. "You see, I have promised, and the people expect me. My patient is a little girl who has been very ill with infantile paralysis. Her father idolizes her, they say. He has a second wife who is devoted to the child, but they want some one who has technical knowledge of nursing. Mr. Tennant is away a good deal; but there are servants and a woman who is either some relative or a companion of Mrs. Tennant. However, I expect to find it rather lonely, as the family, I am told, live in great seclusion."

"Well, let us enjoy ourselves while we are together," Aunt Saphronia said, rising. "I will prepare tea while you go to your room and don your uniform, so that I can realize you are a graduated nurse. I had James carry your baggage up the back stairs."

The double window in the roomy kitchen was open, and thru the breeze-swept space the songbirds in the trees of the back yard poured forth their melody. And the voice of Helen singing snatches of an old song, as she ascended the broad stairs of the front hall, floated down to Miss Milston, whose heart responded in buoyant happiness.

In a short time she had a variety of delicacies placed on the dining-room table, among them the caraway cookies Helen was so fond of in her childhood. She was ready to pour the tea when her niece entered, looking trim and neat in her striped suit and white apron, with the dainty, starched cap sitting jauntily on her wavy brown hair. Aunt Saphronia was delighted with her appearance.

They were like a couple of schoolgirls, as they ate the tea-cakes and spread the butter and jam thick on the thin slices of homemade bread. And thru the open window the sun streamed in onto the oleander which was in full blossom.

"It is so good to be home, Aunt Saphronia," said Helen, heartily. "I really wish I could stay all summer. It is so restful here; and somehow, I feel as if I was going to experience tempestuous times before I see you again. If I was the least bit timid I should surely back out."

"You are brave like your father, Helen," her aunt observed, admiringly. "It was said of him that he wasn't afraid of anything. He was a soldier, you know."

"I ought to have been a boy. I could have achieved so much more, then. I could have fought for my country, as my father did, if need be. I would liked to have captured Villa, I think."

"Now, now, Helen!" laughed her aunt, who was feeling the weight of her years fall away from her in the presence of youth. "If you really want to capture a man, why not a civilized one?"

"I should know what to do with Villa — I should hang him."

"Well, if you are really as ferocious as you talk, you will do for the place you have taken, even tho there is adventure ahead of you, as you anticipate."

"There was something so strange and mysterious about the description of the place sent me that it aroused my interest at once. I will keep you informed from the first.

"Now tell me something about the girls I used to chum with. They are all scattered, I suppose. Did Beryl Stanhope marry Richard Dallas?"

"Oh, no! I thought I had written you about that. Beryl eloped with a stranger—a dark, foreign-looking man, whom nobody knew anything about. Poor Dick! he was awfully cut up about it—vowed he would hunt the world over till he found the man who had stolen her from him and kill him."

"How romantic!" exclaimed Helen, earnestly. "I hope he does it. No one has any right to Beryl but Dick. They had loved each other almost from the cradle up. I suppose it spoiled his career. He was studying to be a physician, wasn't he?"

"Yes; he dropped that and joined the detective force, so to be in a position to ferret out their whereabouts. He believed there was something underhanded in the way this man won Beryl from him."

They had finished their repast, and now rose and washed and put away the dishes, still discussing people they knew. Aunt Saphronia repeated bits of news concerning things that had transpired during Helen's absence.

Repairing to the parlor, Helen picked up the album, searching it eagerly for likenesses of the friends of her girlhood days.

"Oh," she exclaimed, suddenly, "here is Beryl's picture!"

A face, perfect in contour, with a crown of dull gold hair, looked up at her smilingly. Tho the face was beautiful, there was a firmness about the lips and rounded chin that denoted strength of character.

"I believe Dick is right," said Helen, thoughtfully. "Beryl never deserted him voluntarily. She had no relatives to inquire into the matter, and I am glad Dick took it up. It is like him to sift the thing to the bottom.

"Aunt Saphronia," she continued, in a burst of confidence, lifting her dark eyes unflinchingly, "if you want to know why I am not likely to marry, it is because there is no man on earth whom I admire as I do Dick Dallas. Not that I want him for a husband. He belongs to Beryl, and I would be glad of a chance to help bring them together. I think I am destined to be an old maid, Aunt Saphronia. I'll come back and keep you company when I'm old."

"You'll never grow old, Helen. You are a bachelor girl, remember."

Helen laughed and closed the album. A little later the two women dressed and went to call on several of their mutual friends. They had company in the evening, so it was late when they retired.

While undressing that night, Helen removed from her neck a gold chain and opened the locket attached. It contained a miniature of Richard Dallas. Beryl had given her the picture while they were at school together, as Dick had sent her several. She had put it in her locket and had worn it ever since.

The moonlight was streaming in between the muslin curtains at her window when she fell asleep. She awoke sometime later from a vivid dream of Dick Dallas and Beryl Stanhope reunited. Mixed up with the dream was a dark-complexioned stranger whose personality held her in its thrall. There was some secret of his which she had discovered; but she would not betray him to Dick for some reason, tho she wanted to see Beryl and Dick reunited.

The dream troubled her all the next day, it was so confusing, and yet, so fascinating. But she could not bring herself to speak of it to Aunt Saphronia. She did not know just how to put it into words.

Three weeks later Helen Milston bade good-by to her aunt and boarded the train en route for her destination. Aunt Saphronia waved her handkerchief in the direction of the fast-receding train, and Helen waved in return, and then settled down in her seat with a sigh.

Just across the aisle from her sat a tall, dark man, with handsome, clean-cut features. He was clean-shaven and had very dark eyes. Immediately she remembered the man in her dream. But a moment later she forgot him, and making herself comfortable in her seat, she opened the locket, partly from force of habit and partly to pass away the time, and gazed at the miniature within. The locket was set with a single diamond, surrounded with pearls of smaller size. It was a gift from her aunt some years ago.

Of a sudden Helen felt her gaze drawn to a man opposite and their eyes met. For several moments his dark, magnetic eyes held hers in spite of herself. Then she shook herself free from the thrall of his gaze, and closing the locket with a snap, she began reading a book which she had found in her seat. The title of the book was "Eloped With a Stranger," and she closed it with disgust. It was what Beryl Stanhope had done, and she did not care to be reminded of that just at present. So she sat gazing out of the window, all the while feeling an almost irresistible desire to glance again at the mesmeric eyes opposite. At length a sort of lassitude, such as she had never felt before, began to creep over her whole body.

CHAPTER II.

ROBBED.

AS THE train drew up at her destination Helen roused herself with an effort, and taking her suitcase and parcels, walked down the aisle just ahead of a dark-browed stranger, who jostled against her as she reached the door of the car, apologized, then assisted her to alight, without asking leave. A limousine stood throbbing at the curb, and from beside it a man stepped forth, looking inquiringly around. Helen went toward him and learned that the car had been sent to the little station to meet her. She glanced around her before stepping inside, but she saw nothing of the dark stranger. He had disappeared in the group of people on the station platform.

After the car had started on its journey to the country house several miles distant, she happened to put her hand to her throat to straighten her neckwear, and discovered that her locket and chain were missing. She caught her breath sharply. She had been robbed. But how, when, and by whom? Then she remembered the man with the magnetic eyes, who had jostled against her as she left the train.

Before she had recovered from her bewilderment over the loss of her necklace, the limousine turned off the macadamized highway into private grounds, and she realized that she had reached the Tennant home. She glanced up at the big building and noticed that the shades were down at most of the windows. Large trees grew so near the house that their branches shaded the front veranda, tho between the trees and the highway there was a large sloping lawn with flower-beds bordering the walk.

The place had a gloomy appearance, and she felt as if she were going from sunlight into shadow in more senses than one, as she ascended the front steps.

Her ring was answered by a maid, who conducted her thru a wide hall into a double parlor with heavy draperies between. There were curtained doorways and nooks filled with statues and potted ferns. But nowhere was there a flood of sunlight streaming thru open windows, such as she was used to seeing at home.

A sense of depression seized Helen, as the door closed behind the maid, who had gone to order her baggage sent to her room. A moment later the girl returned and led her up a stairway from the hall to a suite of rooms on the second floor, and left her. Helen understood that she was to prepare for an interview with the lady of the house; and she dreaded it above everything else—she did not know why.

She stood for several minutes looking about her. Her rooms were furnished with upholstered chairs and couches. There were curtained apertures between the rooms, and rugs on the highly polished floors. The atmosphere seemed close, and there was a sort of twilight in the room because of drawn curtains. She went to the front windows and raised the shades, looping back the lace curtains.

"There, that is better," she murmured, as she inhaled a breath of fresh air.

She turned to see the housemaid standing in the room.

"I will see Mrs. Tennant now, if you please," Helen hastened to say.

"Mrs. Tennant is indisposed," was the reply. "I will take you to Miss Cole."

Helen raised her eyebrows.

"Miss Cole is the housekeeper," explained the girl.

Helen followed her without a word. She was nervous, but tried to shake the feeling from her. The maid, whose name, she afterward learned, was Joan, led her to a luxuriously furnished drawing-room on the first floor. There was a large window, with a stained-glass top, from which one caught a glimpse of the river and the forest beyond. But the shades on the other windows were drawn, and the lace curtains hung straight over them to the floor. Consequently the apartment was in the same semi-daylight as the rooms upstairs.

Helen was left alone, and presently a tall woman appeared. She was attired in purple velvet and had a regal appearance. There was a cascade of gold lace on the front of her bodice. Her purple-black hair was arranged on the top of her head like a coronet. Her eyes were as black as her hair. Her age might have been anywhere between 25 and 40, for, evidently, she had recourse to powder and rouge. Helen took her to be of Italian origin.

"I am instructed by Mrs. Tennant to ask you to make yourself perfectly at home," she said pleasantly, but her manner was reserved. "After dinner I will take you to your charge—the child, Theresa.

"Tho you are to care for her," she added, "it is not expected that she will ever get well and strong. She can only be made comfortable. Her father idolizes her. She is the only child of his first marriage. The present Mrs. Tennant appears devoted to her, but," she hesitated, then came closer and continued impressively, "her husband does not quite believe in her devotion. I must caution you to be ever on the alert to guard the child from her machinations."

"You may be sure that I will do so," Helen replied, lowering her voice because the woman had done so. "I understand everything," she added, not understanding just why she said that. For a strange, creepy feeling was stealing over her. She felt as if she was not there herself, but was viewing the scene at one from afar.

The eyes of the tall woman were still

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fastened upon her, and she could not shake herself free from their thrall.

"One thing more," said the voice, that now sounded far away to Helen. "The third floor is private. Anywhere else in the house you may go."

"Oh!" said Helen, stupidly. Then gathering her scattered wits, and rousing herself as from a nightmare, she gazed firmly into the dark, mesmeric eyes of the tall woman and remarked: "Of course I shall not need to go there."

"The rooms on the third floor are kept locked," continued Miss Cole. "Mr. Tennant believes they are haunted; for sometimes footsteps and other noises are heard there."

Helen shivered and cast a half-frightened glance at the regal-looking woman who towered above her. She was not afraid, but somehow—she did not quite know why—she wanted to give the impression that she was possessed of a timid nature. Miss Cole seemed satisfied that this was so. However, as she turned to depart, she paused suddenly and placed her hand on Helen's arm.

"Of course Mrs. Tennant must not know that we suspect her."

Helen merely bowed.

Shortly afterward dinner was served, and Joan appeared to summon Helen to the dining-room. The table was fairly aglitter with snowy napery, cut glass and silver, beneath the chandelier which hung from the frescoed ceiling. It was scarcely sundown outside, and yet the gloom of the interior necessitated the use of artificial light.

Helen could not make the surroundings seem real. Why did these people live in seclusion, and yet amid so much splendor? Why was everything so incongruous—some things up-to-date, and others old-styled, like Miss Cole's attire?

She was still in a state of bewilderment when Mr. Tennant entered the room and Miss Cole presented him to her. She found herself looking into the dark eyes of a tall man, whose drooping mustache was as black as his wavy hair. And she shrank from the searching look he gave her.

"So this is my child's nurse?" he said, extending his hand, and his smile gave Helen a glimpse of even, white teeth. "I am glad you have come. We have been some weeks without a trained nurse; tho Miss Cole is rather efficient in that respect. My wife is too delicate to care for Theresa, even part of the time. I want her relieved of the responsibility entirely. You understand?"

"Yes," Helen answered quietly, taking his words as a confirmation of the meaning the tall woman had so insinuatingly impressed upon her. She had felt a magnetic thrill at his hand-clasp, and had withdrawn her hand immediately. And now she avoided his gaze as, with a winning smile lighting his countenance, he continued:

"You will excuse Mrs. Tennant's absence for tonight. She will see you tomorrow, I think."

After dinner was served the servants retired, leaving the three alone together. Miss Cole and the master kept up a desultory conversation, to which Helen paid little heed. She was thinking deeply. Somewhere she had seen features like her employer's, and just such magnetic eyes. He was handsome, but she did not think she would like him. She was glad when the meal was over.

As she was about to leave the room, she turned to Mr. Tennant and said: "You say your wife is ill. Is there anything I can do for her?"

"She is merely sleeping off the effects of a severe headache," he replied indifferently—or so it seemed to Helen. "Miss Cole will take you to the nursery when you are ready.

"Rose," he looked at the tall woman directly, and her eyes met his unflinchingly, which somehow seemed strange to Helen, who felt all the while as if she must avoid his gaze, "will you see if Mrs. Tennant is quite comfortable? Tell her not to come down tonight, but to order refreshments sent up to her. Babette can wait on Theresa until Miss Milston has rested."

Reluctantly the regal woman turned away, and the master stood silent until she was heard ascending the stairs. Then he turned to Helen.

"Come with me," he said, in a low, tense tone. "I must talk to you."

He led the way to the drawing-room, and Helen had no choice but to follow. He motioned her to a seat on a luxurious divan and seated himself beside her. He leaned forward and said in a low tone:

"It was a pretext to get rid of her, and she knows it. She will return as soon as she thinks she can do so without my mistrusting her motive. But I must speak to you, for the life of my child hangs in the balance. My wife and Rose each suspect the other of designs on my little girl's life."

He rose to his feet and stood erect, his gaze traveling from one curtained doorway to another in a furtive, restless manner. "I am in deep waters," he added, "and I do not know whom to trust."

"You may trust me," Helen said, looking at him fearlessly for the first time.

"Well, then, watch them both," he said. "Do not trust either, lest harm should come to my little Theresa—the child of my first love."

She looked up at him earnestly. "Give me the entire charge of my patient, then. Neither of them must go near her in my absence from her side."

"I am afraid," he ventured hesitatingly, "that I cannot control that. Rose must not know that I mistrust her. She is an old friend of my youth, whom I cannot get rid of. But that is another story.

"See," he said, with a sweep of his hand, "the whole house is shrouded in gloom. It is her doings. Like her soul, everything seems in mourning. It looks as if she is bound to drive me mad!"

"Or your wife to ill health," supplemented Helen; for she believed she was beginning to understand things better already. "It is insanitary to shut out the light and air. There is one place in which I shall insist on having both, and that is in the nursery."

"Oh, I hope so!" he cried. "My child is like a faded blossom. Insist on having your way, Miss Milston."

He went to the curtained aperture and drew the drapery aside, leaving a clear view of the room beyond, so that Rose could not come upon them unawares. Then he again seated himself beside the new nurse.

"I am going to tell you the whole situation," he said. "I want you to stick. Every nurse, so far, has been frightened away; either by appearances which she did not understand, or—er, by myself."

"I am not easily frightened," Helen replied, "not even by spooks."

He gave her a quick glance. "Rose has been telling tales already, I see. That woman is the bane of my life! It is my own fault—or was in the beginning; and now that I would be free, it is too late. She holds me in her power."

He looked gloomily into vacancy; then, after a moment, turned to her and said: "Sometimes I think my wife's delicacy is due to her surroundings. The house is like a tomb. It is Miss Cole's doings. Her will is supreme here."

"It is quite likely," replied Helen. "Even a person of more vitality than I imagine your wife has would at last succumb to an atmosphere such as this. But," and she looked directly into the dark eyes which she had scarcely dared to meet in the beginning, "it may be partly due to other influences. Some personalities are detrimental to others—too mesmeric."

Mr. Tennant looked at her startled. Whether it was a disclosure to him, or only that he thought her taking a great liberty in suggesting such an idea, she was not sure.

"For that I am not entirely responsible," he answered, almost pathetically.

Helen could not tell whether he thought she had been referring to himself or to Miss Cole. She said nothing further on the subject, however.

"I brought you here to explain the situation to you," he said, after a moment's silence. "I want you to stick. In you I see the only salvation of the child I adore and the woman I reverence."

"Reverence?"

"Miss Milston, did you ever love?"

"No," said Helen, quickly. "I have reverenced some one, too. But I have never wanted to marry."

"Well, altho I have married twice, I have never loved but one, that is, with a material love. My feelings for my present wife are wholly spiritual. I am desperate and must have a nurse that will remain in spite of everything. That is why I have told you the truth. Not the whole truth, perhaps, but enough that you may know you will not find things normal in this house. There are times when I am not myself, but another being, because of an influence—an evil, vampire influence, from which I cannot escape. Are you afraid to remain?"

"No, I am not afraid. But I must have my way with things that effect my patient. She must have light and air and cheerful surroundings."

"I am afraid Miss Cole will not permit it," he said, looking worried. "You do not know my position; you cannot guess. I am not able to dictate to the woman, who, without invitation, is in my home."

"Leave her to me, then. There may be a battle royal, but I shall win."

Before he could answer or she could

The dark-browed stranger jostled against her.

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"Leave her to me, then. There may be a battle royal, but I shall win."

Before he could answer or she could learn from his expression whether her plan was agreeable to him, the woman in purple velvet and gold lace stepped into the room adjoining, where she was plainly seen because of the drawn curtains before she was near enough to overhear any of their conversation. She paused and regarded them in silence for a moment; then came forward and drew the portieres with a frown.

"I am unused to close rooms," said Helen, in explanation of the drawn curtains, lest the tall woman should divine that their conversation had been of a private nature. "Air and sunshine, and plenty of them, are my hobbies. I was taught at the hospital that they are most essential."

Mr. Tennant gave a quick sigh of relief, as if Helen's tactful explanation had saved Miss Cole from guessing the truth. As he turned to leave the room, he said:

"You may take Miss Milston to the nursery now, Rose. She is anxious to see her charge."

Then the curtains dropped on his retreating figure, and the two resolute women stood facing each other, fury in the eyes of one and defiance in those of the other. Rose was the first to speak.

CHAPTER III.

THE LITTLE PATIENT.

MISS COLE'S countenance did not relax in its severity, but when she spoke it was in a carefully modulated voice.

"Let me warn you, Miss Milston, not to get too well acquainted with Mr. Tennant. I cannot say more, but I hope you will understand."

Helen rose with dignity. "Take me to my patient, please," she said, ignoring the woman's words.

Rose bit her lip with vexation. Evidently the new nurse would be hard to talk to confidentially, and not the one to receive impressions just as they were given. And she seemed not to be disturbed over the mysterious atmosphere pervading the place. She made no further attempt to influence the girl's mind in the trend she desired it to take, but led the way at once up the broad, velvet-carpeted steps to the nursery across the hall from the apartments already allotted to Helen. There were too many draperies to suit the nurse, and too much gloom and lack of fresh air.

In one corner of a bedroom adjoining the nursery was a cot on which lay a girl of 5 or 6 years. She had a pale little face, with great dark eyes; and over the pillow was scattered a tangled mass of curly hair, equally dark in color. Her cheeks and lips contained a faint trace of color, but her hands were white and thin. Helen, the nurse, for such she became instantly, in feeling as well as in fact, gulped back a lump that rose in her throat the moment her eyes rested on the wan face of the child and the pathetic look in the wonderful dark eyes.

"I haven't come a moment too soon," she murmured to herself.

She imagined the little face lighted up a trifle as she approached the cot. Impulsively she bent over the small invalid.

"Are you the new nurse?" asked the little voice. "Papa said I had one this time who would stay ever and ever so long."

"Your papa was right, little one. Nothing shall influence me to leave you."

"And I am to be good and do just as you say."

"And I am to do anything you want done. We will both do just as we please, and no one shall interfere. Won't that be nice."

She cast a glance at Rose Cole, whose face had grown set and lowering.

"The other nurses made me take nasty medicine," said Theresa, plaintively.

"And that is about all they have done, I should judge," remarked the nurse.

"None of them stayed long enough to do more," interposed Miss Cole. "The master——" She pause and looked at Helen insinuatingly, her rouged lips curling scornfully.

"I understand," Helen replied shortly. "Don't worry about me. I can take care of myself. I can manage that—and everything else," she added meaningly.

She turned down the covers and examined the little limbs affected by an attack of infantile paralysis.

"The child did not have the right care in the beginning," she observed. "She needed massage more than medicine. She needed light and air and to be wheeled out of doors in the sunshine. She needed encouragement and cheerfulness. Evidently she received none of these.

"Miss Cole," she turned suddenly and faced the tall woman, her eyes blazing, "I will remember all you have told me—or rather have tried to tell me. But I shall stay by this neglected bit of humanity, if the heavens fall. Not only because it is my duty, but because it is my nature to do so. I am not easily impressed with vague allusions to danger, and I am going to stick. I shall take full charge of this patient and try to undo the consequences of a shameful neglect. And so far as this part of the house is concerned I will brook no interference. If I am discharged by my employer I will report the case to the authorities. I am ashamed of my predecessors that they did not do that very thing, if they were not brave enough to remain and give the child the care she needed."

She began pacing the floor in agitation. "How a man of wealth, as I assume Mr. Tennant to be, could permit his offspring to come to this pass for lack of proper attention, when there are hospitals where she might have been given a chance, I cannot even imagine!" stormed Helen, wrought up by her discovery of the little girl's condition.

"Wealth is not all-powerful, Miss Milston," said the tall woman's voice. "Nor is such resolution as yours."

The nurse had again bent over the cot, but at those insinuating words whirled and faced the speaker.

"We shall see!" she cried defiantly.

Miss Cole's face became nearly as purple as her apparel. But she was obliged to suppress her anger or show her hand too plainly to this girl, who in many ways was likely to prove a thorn in her flesh. So without further remark she quitted the room. It was easy to be seen that she practiced self-repression, and that she thought it best in this instance.

"I'm glad you've come," Theresa said eagerly, the moment they were alone. "I get so tired of just picture books and toys and Miss Cole."

"But your mamma comes to see you often, no doubt."

"Yes, but not often enough. Papa says it is Rose's fault, but I don't know just how. But you know she's not my real mamma. She's an angel, tho, my papa says. And so beautiful! Her eyes are like pansies after a rain, he says, and

her lips like rose-petals, and her hair the color of a gold-piece."

It was evident the child was repeating her father's description of her stepmother, and Helen began to feel interested in the mistress she had not yet seen.

"Is her hair bright and glossy?" she asked, merely to show her interest.

"No, it is dull; but it is pretty, tho."

There was silence for a space while Helen glanced around the room, noting the massive furniture, so unsuited for a child's apartment. Then she looked at the little one and smiled.

"There is so much to be done to make you comfortable and happy. But it won't be long before I will have you out of that bed. How long have you been ill?"

"Oh, I don't know; it seems long."

Helen turned away to hide the moisture in her eyes, and going to the window she pulled the shades nearly to the top and raised the sash.

"Is that too great a change?" she asked, looking toward the little bed.

"Oh, it is so nice!" exclaimed Theresa, her eyes shining. "I can feel the breeze."

Helen lifted her onto a couch, while she made up the bed and put the pillow in the window to air. And before putting her back she brushed and curled the tangled hair.

"After I have closed the window I am going to bathe you and rub your limb," she said. "Tell me where I can find your clean clothing."

The child indicated a chest of drawers, and Helen decided the clothes would need airing also, and put them in the open window. Later, when the garments had been warmed and put on the freshly bathed body, the child snuggled down between the clean sheets and took a refreshing nap.

Meanwhile Helen did what she could to freshen and brighten the room, then sat down by the window and waited until her little charge awoke.

After smoothing the pillows and straightening the bed clothing, so soothing to a sick person, she asked Theresa what she would like to eat.

"Oh, I don't know what I want. I'm not very hungry. Joan usually brings me whatever is left," replied the child.

"Well, I am going to fix you something especially for you—something you will like."

"If cook will let you," ventured Theresa.

"She will have to let me. I shall insist."

Theresa laughed. "It's a man," she said.

"Oh," said Helen, and also laughed. Then she went down to beard the lion in his den, as she remarked to Theresa.

It was a large kitchen, the only pleasant room in the house, so the nurse thought as she entered it. The chef, as Joan called him, was a dark man of medium height. He wore a mustache and goatee that were nearly black, tho his hair and eyes were merely a dark brown. He stared at the girl without speaking, and she was obliged to take the initiative.

"I am Miss Theresa's nurse," she explained. "May I use your kitchen to prepare her some supper?"

"Certainly," he replied, but immediately turned his back toward her and managed to keep his face averted as much as possible, tho he told her where to find the necessary articles. Helen thought his manner strange, and gave him a keen glance. Somewhere she had seen those expressive eyes before. She was not good at remembering faces; she did not carry people's features stamped upon her memory. But instinctively her thoughts flew back to the man who had sat across the aisle from her in the train. But then, she had done the same when she first met Mr. Tennant. And yet neither of these men could have been the one who robbed her.

But why was it, she wondered, that every one connected with this household was dark-complexioned — except, of course, the mistress, whom she had not seen?

The chef held the door open for her when she was ready to depart with her tray, but he still kept his eyes averted.

"Everybody wants to keep aloof from me," she grumbled to herself. "What are they afraid of? It is the strangest, most uncanny place I was ever in."

The nurse found Theresa wide awake when she returned; and placing the tray on a small table beside the bed, she raised the girl to an upright position and arranged the pillows to support her while she ate. It was a tempting, dainty repast that greeted Theresa's eager eyes as Helen uncovered the tray, and she clapped her hands together gleefully.

There were broth, cereal, dainty dessert and several kinds of fruit, all arranged on the prettiest and smallest dishes to be found in the pantry.

"Oh, they never fix it like that," exclaimed Theresa. "They just send me anything they have left. How good everything tastes."

When she had finished, Helen set the tray to one side and rang for a maid to take it away. "I will read to you now until you are sleepy. And tomorrow I will have you moved to my apartments, and you shall sit by the open window and watch the birds flitting among the trees and hear them sing. If your father will get you a wheeled chair, I will take you out in the air and sunshine. I will get some plants from the conservatory and put in your window, and you shall have cut flowers every day."

"Mamma brings me flowers sometimes; and papa promised me a canary."

"We will have the canary, too, then. And I am going to rub your limb for hours every day. Massage will cure it, I believe, and in time you will be able to walk."

"Oh," cried Theresa, "if I only could!" Her eyes were shining like twin stars, and the nurse continued her words of encouragement.

"You could walk with a crutch now, if you had been given the right care. Tomorrow I will let you lean on me and we will go out on the lawn. Anyway, we will get out of doors if I have to carry you."

"And will I be able to see Hidden Lodge from the lawn?"

"Hidden Lodge?" Helen repeated. Then she remembered having read of the place. "What is hidden there?"

"The house is hidden among the trees," explained Theresa, "and no one knows what is going on there. But the chimneys can be seen from the third floor. I heard Babette—Babette is Miss Cole's maid—say that her mistress went to the third floor where the ghosts are to watch for smoke from the chimney."

"Then some one lives there?"

"She doesn't know yet. But there is some mystery there, she thinks."

"Oh!" said Helen, in about the same manner that a child would say it when listening to an explanation that didn't explain.

But long after the little girl was asleep she sat pondering over the alleged mystery, and wondering if it could be connected, in any way, with the mystery surrounding the big house and its inmates. And then her thoughts wandered to Mrs. Tennant, and it seemed to her that from the description Theresa had given of her stepmother she must be situated something as a dove would be among a flock of hawks.

She left the sleeping child and went out into the grounds for a breath of fresh air before going to bed, not expecting to run across something still more puzzling and mystifying. The night was warm, the air balmy, and above her the stars gleamed against the dark-blue sky. She drew a long breath and seated herself on a rustic bench beneath one of the spreading trees, whose branches nearly obscured the stars. She gave a scrutinizing glance around, for she was not yet familiar with her surroundings. Suddenly she started and gave a gasp of surprise, then shrank farther into the shadows and waited. Coming across the lawn, straight toward her, was a slight figure, clad in a flimsy white gown that trailed on the soft grass as she glided forward. So ethereal was the apparition that Helen wondered if it was not one of the ghosts that were supposed to haunt the rooms on the third floor. What was her surprise, her astonishment, when she recognized in the ethereal figure in the flimsy gown, her old schoolmate and friend of other days —Beryl Stanhope!

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it, and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

THE EYE OF SIVA

-:- Or -:-

Pools of Flame

By James Edmond Casey

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CHAPTER VII.

POOLS OF FLAME.

"YOU'RE right! I see it! But why? What reason had he for it?"

"He wanted to be mistaken for her! By the servants—any one that might see him!"

The stout detective thought on that for a moment.

"Perhaps. But it seems to me there was deeper reason. Why, in the name of reason, should a man disguise himself as his wife? Merely to dupe those who might see him? No, no! There was a deeper motive. What was it?"

Neither Carter Van Cleave nor Malachi Courtney could answer that. Before the stupendous mystery surrounding the murder of Hubert Belasco they stood helpless, overwhelmed. And then Van Cleave, from looking at the four-armed, pearl-eyed leering image of Siva, the Destroyer, glanced down at the Kirmanshah rug.

"Look, Malachi! That red spot! On the floor!"

And, excited by his discovery, the cub made to reach down. But the detective stayed him.

"Go slow, me son! We're up in the air as high as I care to go. We've got to take soundings every few minutes, and know why we take the next step, if we would solve this mystery, that is. Now, what is it?"

Van Cleave, without a word, pointed to the foot of the teak stand upon which old Siva squatted.

There, almost buried from sight in the rich depths of the Persian rug, between two outspread fingers of the other hand of the dead man than the one which had held the Japanese dagger, something round and red glinted in the light.

The two investigators leaned over the prostrate man and stared down at the crimson thing.

"A ruby!" gasped the cub.

"A red stone. It was held in the hand of Hubert Belasco when he was murdered—in his clinched left fist. In his right was the stiletto. Whether it's a genuine ruby, we don't know yet. But now that we've got the precise lay of the land, you can reach down and pick it up, Van Cleave."

The cub had to lift the dead man's hand to get the stone. That must have released the silver cigarette case from its place of concealment in the bosom of the green dress. For suddenly it rolled across the rug from beneath the body, then stopped and broke open.

At that, both men cried out with astonishment. In the case lay five cigarettes and three precious stones!

Malachi forgot his caution about going slow. He swooped down upon the case. He help up the three stones to the light.

One was well-nigh as big as a walnut and charged with the red lifeblood of a pigeon—a ruby. The two others were pearls as large as the ruby, with a cold, white shimmer in their depths.

"Lord!" gasped the detective. "Two monster pearls and a big pigeon-blood ruby!"

"Look at mine! It is the exact mate of that ruby in your hand. It is a crimson monster, too!"

Malachi took the stone out of Van Cleave's hand and put it in his palm beside the ruby and the pearls. Then, for a long, long time, the two men gazed down at the precious, perfect pools of red and white flame. Never had they seen such masterpieces of sea and mine!

And then, from between Malachi Courtney's white lips leaped the shattering words of a discovery:

"Cub, they are fakes!"

CHAPTER VIII.

INTRIGUE.

FAKE? These monster rubies and pearls—fake?" Then Van Cleave got a grip on himself. "Are you sure?"

"Shure? Why, me boy, I'm as shure these stones are fakes—cheap, foolish imitations—as I am that I'm standing here! Believe me; I know stones! I've had experience in jewel robberies and diamond swindles. But these are such large stones that I was taken in. I did not dream they were imitations."

He held one of the monster pearls to the full light of the window.

"It does not look so good as it did in the shadow of the room. No. Even you can see it is a poor job. And this ruby. Say, Van Cleave, this is the crudest work yet. This ruby we thought worth the crown of a czar is hardly more than a piece of crimson glass!"

It was as plain as day. In the shadows of the heavy, Oriental room, they had dreamed the stones were genuine, priceless. In the light of the window, they saw they were but colored bits of glass. It was almost cruel how very cheap and crude were the imitations.

"The laugh's on us, me boy. We have been dealing with daggers studded with real gems, and other priceless Oriental things. This discovery puts a damper on the gorgeousness of our mystery."

With a grim laugh, the detective made as if to hurl the four huge stones upon the floor, as of no account. But he paused and suddenly thrust them into the hand of the surprised cub.

"Hold these while I jot down a note of them in my book. And hold them with care, me boy, for they are priceless treasures of Ind and Tartary!"

He laughed that mirthless laugh again. Then, the note finished, he added:

"Well, I guess this discovery of the false rubies and pearls ends our morning's investigation. We'll knock off work now."

The hand of Carter Van Cleave that held the four stones clinched tightly and dropped to his side. He was astounded by the detective's concluding statement. He had thought the real investigation just begun; thought that they had succeeded in tunneling thru the outer crust of the mystery and were on the very brink of subterranean passages, which would lead them to its soul. And here the great Malachi told him the investigation was at an end!

To Carter Van Cleave, it was almost unbelievable. His face pale, he gasped:

"Why, what do you mean? We have just started this investigation. We haven't learned one basic fact—who killed Hubert Belasco—why he was here last night! We have several clews, and it only remains for us to follow them out to learn the answers to this mystery. And now you say the investigation is ended, over, done with!"

It was a plea. He wanted badly to keep on with the search and find the solution of the mystery. He desired to make good his bluff, to learn the whole truth for his paper and write a story that would make him star.

During the three days when no detail had been his, Van Cleave had told himself repeatedly that, if he was sent out on a big enough story, he would so handle and write it that he would make a hit. He felt it in him. And that was what had prompted his words to Patullo. This was the very story to make him star!

But that was not all. To tell the truth, Carter Van Cleave, tho he did not know it, was something of a detective. He felt a pleasurable thrill in running down the inexplicable. Also, he was analytical and quick-working of brain.

And if there was any one at that time that realized Carter Van Cleave had the makings of a detective in him, it was Malachi Courtney, a detective who ranked as great among his kind. He put his hand on the cub's shoulder and smiled into his wistful face.

"Yes, me boy; I mean that the investigation is over for the time being. I really think——"

"But my story! I'll have only suppositions to write!"

Malachi laughed.

"Do you know what 'Scoop' Norton, your star man, told me when he and I were on the Bessie Lloyd-Chinatown case? 'The first day's my great day,' says he. 'I'm not confined by facts. I have plenty of latitude. And I fill up my story with color and end in a big "Why!" That's what the people like to read, Malachi.'"

The detective clapped the cub on the shoulder.

"But you're more of a detective than a reporter, Van Cleave! I know. Haven't I witnessed some of your work? But to explain about quitting this investigation so cold."

He looked around the room to make sure they were alone. When he proceeded it was in a lower tone of voice.

"Old Morton Seymour, this Ynez Belasco's father, is so rich and powerful we have to handle anything concerning him or his with kid gloves—gently and quietly, you understand. That's why this whole investigation is a secret.

"Now, if it gets out that there's scandal at the bottom of this affair—bing! off goes the chief's head, and mine, and perhaps Patullo's and yours. Oh, yes; Papa Seymour has an interest in the Mail-Tribune, like he has in most everything else in this town. My instructions were that if I scented scandal——"

"But there is no scandal here!"

Very slowly Malachi Courtney partly closed the lid of his left eye in a knowing wink.

"Think so, me laddybuck? Then why else is Hubert Belasco, disguised as his wife, dead in her boudoir? Why the Japanese stiletto in his hand? Why his wife's words about the red ring around his throat? Why, me boy? Why? Why?"

CHAPTER IX.

FIRED.

THE mind of Carter Van Cleave staggered under that fusillade from the detective. Was it true that some base intrigue was at the bottom of this mystery, after all?

Courtney once more tipped him that preposterous wink.

"Scandal, me boy; scandal's the word! Some intrigue between this red-haired Mrs. Belasco and unknown society man, and her young husband's resultant suspicion and jealousy! If you can get any

other motive, try it. But now I'm going to telephone to the chief."

He turned away, then paused and flung back:

"Before I state my theory, I'll bet the old man says: 'Looks like scandal behind this affair, Malachi. Better close down and fade away. This is a case where we'd better be deaf, dumb and blind till we see what old Seymour and his daughter have to say!"

The detective came back and looked hard at the cub.

"You get me, Van Cleave? If we were to prosecute this investigation further and then throw it into the courts and newspapers, the whole world would reek with the odors of scandal and old Seymour would have all of us guillotined sure, if he had to move heaven and earth to do it!

"So you and I, the chief and Patullo have got to back up and keep mum. We've got to wait until Morton Seymour, the plute, or his daughter says: 'Go ahead. Find out who murdered Hubert Belasco.' And they won't do that if it's a case of intrigue. It will be simple suicide, or something else as impossible! Understand?"

The cub did. He saw that many things went on behind the scenes of police and newspaper life of which the outer and bigger world had no ken. He realized that some multimillionaires have a clutch on men whose names they have never heard, and can work the strings which either send those men to oblivion or open doors that lead them to success.

But one thing he could not understand. That was how Malachi Courtney could arrive at the theory that jealousy and suspicion were the motives of the crime.

He waited until the good-natured, ruddy-faced detective took himself off to telephone to the chief of police. Then, looking down at the dead man in the green dress at the foot of the evil bronze god, Siva, the Destroyer, he spoke his mind.

"I am sure this is not a scandal case. Ynez Belasco, I judge to be freakish, self-willed and passionate, but I doubt that she is a shameful intriguer. Her passionate and sincere outcry proved that she loved this murdered man."

He clinched his fists and looked up at white-eyed, old Siva.

"There is no scandal here!" he said aloud and conclusively. "Courtney is wrong for once! His chief, if he thinks likewise, is wrong! The mystery is deeper than commonplace scandal! Of that I feel sure. And I'll make it my task to find out the true secret and motive of this mystery!"

He caught sounds, presently, of Malachi telephoning to headquarters.

"That reminds me! I had better ring up Patullo and tell him all the developments of the case thus far."

In his three days of waiting for an editor to call him, Carter Van Cleave had daily seen this thing done by the reporters. Now it was to receive further instructions, but more often it had been to let the desk man know how big was the "story," in order that he might detail other men to cover different ends of the same piece of news, if the need were.

Van Cleave went to the Chinese sedan-chair, which was in a far corner of the Oriental boudoir, and into which, he had noted long before, a telephone was wired. It was not a common sedan such as throng the alleys of China, but a gorgeous red and yellow upholstered palanquin. And so, in cushioned state, he sat back and put the receiver to his ear.

He was several minutes in getting the office and the city desk; then:

"Hello! Mr. Patullo? This is Van Cleave—the cub on the Belasco story."

"The cub? Well, you blankety-blank, God-forsaken, would-be reporter, what do you mean by this?"

"By what?"

"Why, in the name of the infernal regions, didn't you ring me up once or twice this morning? Blankety-blank it, you thought you were running this story—eh? You failure and son of a thousand worse failures——"

* * *

SUFFERING CATS!
GIVE THIS MAN
THE GOLD MEDAL

Let folks step on your feet hereafter; wear shoes a size smaller if you like, for corns will never again send electric sparks of pain through you, according to this Cincinnati authority.

He says that a few drops of a drug called freezone, applied directly upon a tender, aching corn, instantly relieves soreness, and soon the entire corn, root and all, lifts right out.

This drug is a sticky ether compound, but dries at once and simply shrivels up the corn without inflaming or even irritating the surrounding tissue.

It is claimed that a quarter of an ounce of freezone obtained at any drug store will cost very little but is sufficient to remove every hard or soft corn or callus from one's feet. Cut this out, especially if you are a woman reader who wears high heels.

"But Mr. Patullo——"

Another string of "cuss" words that were red-hot and frightfully to the point cut the cub short. Patullo could swear like the old newspaper man he was, and that personage can put the quietus on the proverbial trooper for verbal pyrotechnics.

But at last even that overwhelming philippic burned itself out, and in the momentary truce, Van Cleave took courage to say:

"Mr. Courtney and I have discovered that the man murdered here was not stabbed, but strangled to death. And he was the master of this house, Hubert Belasco, the——"

"Hubert Belasco murdered in his own house? Not stabbed, but strangled? Why, you blankety-blank nincompoop, what kind of a dodo do you think I am to believe that! Blast and rot you, I stood your back-talk, but this is too blankety-blank much. Don't let me see your blanked face again, or I'll commit battery, mayhem and murder! 'Scoop' Norton is on his way up to the Belasco house. And you, you son of a thousand failures—you're fired!"

CHAPTER X.

ON HIS OWN.

CARTER VAN CLEAVE collapsed against the silken cushions of the gorgeous palanquin. He dropped the receiver with a bang on its hook. His other hand clinched tightly about the four monster fake stones, which, unknowingly, he had held in his hand all the time, and shoved them viciously into the pocket of his coat. Then, slowly and precisely, he remarked:

"Fired!"

That meant much to Carter Van Cleave. Here he was, a fugitive senior, having been thrown out of Pennsy for reviving that old buccaneer of college society, The Picaroon. He had hoboed it across the continent, instead of calling on his folks for aid, until the Pacific had barred his progress westward.

Then he had made the rounds of San Francisco dailies. The Mail-Tribune was finally induced to give him a week's trial at nothing the week! And here he was, on his first detail, on the story that promised the sensation of the year—fired!

"That's no joke!" he gritted. "It's a tragedy. I'm almost broke—and in a strange city, at that! And also, I've lost my big chance to make good in the newspaper game—the chance of a lifetime to score a hit!"

Feeling completely down and out, the young fellow got up and left the sedan. He gazed about the scene of his first and last detail—the gorgeous room he would have painted in words of fire! Heavens! what a story it would have been. It would have startled and astounded and mystified the whole city. It would have made his name famous, himself a star!

"What deuced, confounded luck! Just the story to make good—and I fail! And I started out on it with such a high heart! I investigated the mystery with such zest and earnest desire to lay it bare!"

He clinched his hands and paced up and down the room.

"But perhaps it was because I was so enamored with the mystery that I didn't succeed. If I had had less interest and rung up Patullo sooner, I still would have my job. Perhaps I have too much of the detective in me, as Malachi says, and too little of the reporter to make good on a newspaper. And now——"

He shook his clinched fist at the evil, leering image of Siva, the Destroyer.

"I am neither reporter nor detective. I am a broken man out of a job. And 'Scoop' Norton, the star, is on his way up here to take my job from me! D——!"

Up and down, up and down, head bowed, hands clinched, brow furrowed, the erstwhile cub paced that magnificent Oriental boudoir. He forgot that it was a chamber of assassination and mystery. He thought only of the crushing blow that had fallen on him from the bludgeon of fate.

Suddenly he halted—jerked himself to a standstill as abruptly as tho stricken with paralysis.

"Good Lord, what a whining, whimpering mollycoddle I am! Here I've been crying about my ill-luck when—Jove! what's to stop me from staying on?"

His face flushed, his blue eyes alight with new fire, he flung out his arms in sheer joy.

"I'll stick!" he cried. "Let 'Scoop' Norton come! I'll ferret out this mystery myself, by my own hand! With my own brain I'll tear off the mask from this enigma! I will yet write a story to startle the city!"

CHAPTER XI.

OFF ON A NEW SCENT.

CARTER VAN CLEAVE wheeled about and walked from the room of death.

"I am attached to the Mail-Tribune staff no longer. 'Scoop' Norton will be here in a half-hour or less. But until he comes, I need not fear to go on with my search. Then I can cast about for some means whereby, tho no longer a reporter, I still can keep on the job and continue my investigations."

His feet sinking deeply into the rich carpet, he descended the wide staircase to the first floor of the mansion.

"Now for the kitchen and a bite to eat. Pauline, the French maid, said a meal awaited us there by the madam's order. I hate to accept the hospitality, but I'm well-nigh broke and thoroly famished. Besides, I want to get some details of the Belasco family from the servants, and in the kitchen is where I'll find them!"

The domain of the Belasco cook proved to be a room clean and bright as a battleship and redolent with odors of good things well cooked.

Dan, the policeman, was seated at a small table, wiping his mouth after a feast without precedence.

"Ah, here's the cub the chief took such a fancy to! Come on in and have something, Mr. Cleave!"

It seemed this was not the first meal Dan had enjoyed in the Belasco mansion; he had formerly been a patrolman in that vicinity; and he speedily put Van Cleave at ease by introducing him to the cook, a buxom Irish girl, and the two rather pretty parlor maids, who stood by watching the great man eat and artfully talk.

"Malachi is just after finishing his meal," he explained. "He is going over the ground on the outside, now."

Now, there is no task easier than making a servant speak of her employers. Neither can be found a better source of information, as no one knows another more intimately than a servant, from constant association, does those she serves. Hence, Carter Van Cleave found no difficulty in learning all he desired.

He already knew that Ynez Belasco was the only daughter of Morton Seymour, the white-haired, old '49er and most influential magnate on the Pacific Coast. From the cook, who had left the service of the father for that of the daughter, he learned how Mrs. Belasco, when a child, had been pampered, her every desire gratified by her widowed, adoring, old father.

Consequently, Ynez Belasco, from an indulged, pretty child, had grown to a beautiful woman of many eccentricities and an imperious will that admitted of no violation.

Even before she made her debut to society, she showed her will and odd taste. She traveled—not to Europe like the rest of society; she had done that several times as a child. Alone, save for a few servants, she explored the South Seas and the Orient.

In a yacht, she invaded the lagoons of Pacific atolls never before penetrated by white man; then the Philippines, Borneo, India, China and Japan. She even went as far as Tibet and Siberia. She was gone two years.

When she returned, it was as a Buddhist, with treasures from mandarins' palaces, Tibetan nunneries, and Chinese pagodas. Yet, such was her elegant taste, she brought back with her no more trunks than do many tourists with curios one thousand times less valuable.

Society fell prostrate at her feet. But sensation-loving, willful Ynez Seymour had not come back to enjoy the tame life of a society debutante. Right off, she eloped with a young fellow she had met on a visit to her father at one of his banks—handsome, but shallow-brained Hubert Belasco.

Belasco came of an old, but poor Spanish family. He had gone to college and, entering the bank, had plodded along until he was teller. Plodded—that is the only word, for, save for a too pretty face, he was the most ordinary of clerks; a slow-going, ambitionless plodder.

It was said that Ynez Seymour, who could have had the pick of society, had done all the wooing, and then eloped with Hubert Belasco—not the inane Apollo with her.

Anyhow, it gave old Seymour the shock of his life, the servants said. He did not disinherit and cast off his only daughter. That would be too much. But he refused to recognize his son-in-law, and only gave his daughter his million-dollar palace in Pacific avenue and the same monthly allowance that had been hers before her marriage.

Thus it was that Hubert Belasco had to continue working at the bank, as his wife's allowance only by great stretching paid for her Paris gowns and hats, automobiles and other luxuries. Ynez Belasco was the boss in her own house and she did with her allowance as she willed; and Hubert Belasco did the same with his wages.

So the first year of married life had passed in the great Pacific avenue mansion. Belasco had been raised, thru the influence of his weakening father-in-law, to a cashiership. His wife had gone the rounds of society life—balls, teas, parties—and sometimes he had accompanied her.

That Ynez Belasco had loved her handsome husband with all her passionate, willful nature, the servants were positive. That he returned her affection in a cooler, but no less sincere manner, as would be expected from one of his plodding temperament, they were as sure. The Belascos had been an ideal married couple, particularly, for the smart set.

Van Cleave saw that Ynez Belasco with her strong will, was the dominant factor in the house. The servants spoke of the young master with liking, but little respect; as one easy to please, quiet and gentlemanly, untalkative and plodding; a man who rose at the same time each morning, went to bed at a regular hour, said little to anybody, and yet affected everybody with neither lik-

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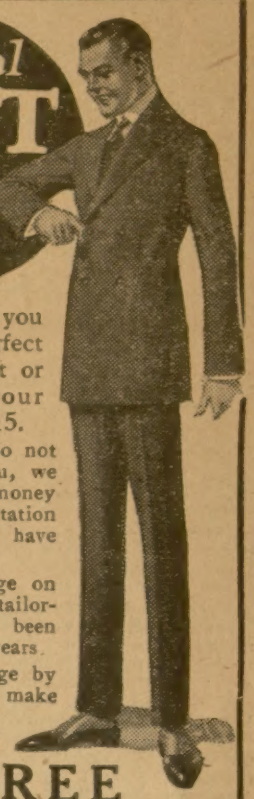

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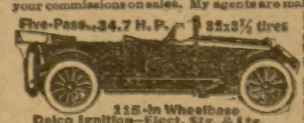

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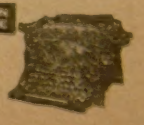

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ing nor dislike, but a slight bit of contempt.

And this was the Hubert Belasco, who lay dead in his wife's boudoir, disguised as a woman, the red ring of strangulation about his throat, a curious, Oriental dagger in his back.

For the past month he had been growing quieter and lonelier, even, in manner, the servants said. At length, he had broached to his lovely wife the idea of visiting his mother in Los Angeles. He got two weeks' leave from the bank, bade his wife, before the eyes of one of the maids, an affectionate adieu—and was found, three days later, cold in death upon his face in his wife's boudoir!

That was the wheat of the information which Carter Van Cleave sifted from the chaff of talk. It was the complete and secret family history of the Belascos.

The amateur gum-shoe made a pretense of finishing his meal—he had consumed all he could stand long before. Then he got to his feet to leave. But the smiling, buxom cook stopped him with a question.

"Misther Carter, if you be such a foine daytective as that divvil of an omadhoun Dan claims ye are, will you tell us poor gurls who killed the masther? For meself, Oi'm shure they be dirthy scamps av burglars—Hivin save us from the loike av such!"

Van Cleave laughed uneasily, for he did not know what answer to make.

"But Nora, why do you think they are burglars?" he hedged.

"Whoy, you ask me? Well, Misther Carter, didn't Oi foind a window open——"

"What! A window open?"

"Shure, Misther Carter. When Oi came down this mornin' Oi found one av the basement windows all the way open. 'Tis one av those on the north soide, facin' Scott street."

The former cub nodded that he understood.

"I might have known!" he muttered. "I'll investigate!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE CRIMSON CLOTH.

NORA, the cook, guided Van Cleave to the basement, and showed him the window she had found open to the night and darkness.

It was a small, square window, chin high above the cement floor of the basement, and, on the outside, almost on a level with the green lawn that sloped gently down toward Scott street. It was the means of entrance, Van Cleve believed, of the one that had killed Hubert Belasco—whatever evil spirit of the night that one was.

As the amateur gum-shoe stood looking out the window at the green, he debated how to begin his search. Should he crawl out the window and look for footprints in the soft turf? No, he decided; the blind scramble might obliterate some important clew.

"I have it! I'll leave this window open to show me which one it is, and go around to the street and pick up the trail of the assassin from the point where he stepped onto the lawn—if I can."

Van Cleave came out from the half-dark basement to the palace-lined avenue via a coal hole. He followed the low, concrete hedge, which separated the gently sloping lawn from the sidewalk. At the juncture of Scott street and Pacific avenue, directly diagonal from the open basement window, he made his first discovery!

Just inside the angle of the stone hedge, the grass was beaten down and muddied by footsteps!

"Ah! Now let me yell 'Eureka, I have found it!' Lucky for me this is April, not August. The last three nights I cursed the rain, like most men who are up against it. Now it turns me a good act!"

He stepped over the low wall and studied the wallow of footsteps. Then, his eyes fastened on the wet grass, he slowly started on a bee-line for the basement window. He was following a well-defined line of footprints!

He stooped over an unusually clear impression to examine it closely. It was deeply imbedded in the turf and broken grass, and a little water covered the bottom.

"Footprints are the visiting cards of animals—and men. They are a history of movement, a hint to description. Now let me see. What would Sherlock Holmes or Monsieur Lecoq deduce from this print?"

He got to his knees in his engrossment.

"If I were Sherlock Holmes, I'd say: 'Watson, the fellow that made this footmark was a very tall man—over six feet, I think—and not a bit fat or broad—a lean, big-boned, narrow man—like myself, Watson.

" 'How do I know that? Gad, my deah fellow, cawn't you read the footmark? It's beastly simple! Notice it is much longer than wide, unusually long and narrow—a tall man. Look at the distance between this and the one ahead, or behind—what long legs he must have!

" 'But where do I make out he is lean, not fat—eh? Well, my deah fellow, we know he is tall; but this impression is not very deep. He then cannot be very heavy—not heavy enough for his height—a tall, angular, thin-boned villain. Great Scott! I can almost see the man!"

He got to his feet and, as he did, suddenly saw that his trousers were muddied at the knees. But he only laughed at that.

"It was worth spoiling my trousers! If I'm correct in my deductions, I can almost identify this assassin on sight. But it is one thing being sure of a deduction in a story book, and another, making a correct one here, and sticking to it."

He went to move on, then paused abruptly.

"Jove, that almost escaped me! I felt there was something peculiar about these footprints; now I know! They are flat, as if the man's shoe had no heel. Save for that and the large size, they might be the footprints of a woman! They are long and narrow enough. Gee, their shape sickens me!"

It was plain, as the amateur detective moved on, that he was no longer confident. His eyes roved this way and that from the line of footprints he was following. And, of a sudden, he sighted a new impression of a foot off from the track he was following!

He stepped over. It was long, pointed and heeless—of the same odd, womanish shape as the others, only smaller, as if made by a small man—or a woman!

Whether man or woman, Van Cleave did not know. But he did know that it had been stamped into the soil by a different, and smaller, person than the maker of the footprints he first had found and examined.

There were two assassins!

Like a sleuth-hound, the young fellow started on the track of the footprints. They led on, clearly and plainly to the eye, directly across the lawn for the small, square window in the basement.

But ere he reached that window, Van Cleave paused. The tracks puzzled him.

"Well, I'll be hanged! How many assassins were there? I've counted two—one short, the other tall and lean. Now there seem to be four! No; it is only three!"

He searched around a moment.

"Yes; three there were. One tall, the other two short, and all light and effeminate. Here are the long, narrow, pointed marks, like women's! But——"

He moved on.

"Here there is the track of only one pair of footprints! Did only one advance, the tall one? Or did the others tread intentionally in his footsteps? Yes; they did! For here there are three pairs of footmarks, now one, now two, and then three again!"

Head down, eyes bent, the former cub sped across the lawn on the track of the unmistakable footprints of three persons—three strange persons, one tall and lean, the others short and light, and all wearing long, narrow shoes, like a woman's.

"I'm on the right track!" exulted the cub. "These footprints were made last night and at the same time! They have given me a hint to the assassins' looks! And I am the first one to discover them!"

He sighted the open basement window just ahead, and straightened his neck from its cramped posture, and looked up. As he did, he snapped to a standstill, then fell back a step. His eyes widened with amazement.

Hanging from the boudoir window in the second story of the Belasco mansion, just above the basement window, was a long, narrow strip of crimson cloth!

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it, and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

War Economy.

"Well, what are you doing to help buy bullets for the boys?" asked Sanderson, as he gripped Dix by the hand.

"Economizing," laughed Dix, touching off a 10 cent cigar, and handing Sanderson it's mate.

"That's fine—fine—I'm proud of you—proud to know you're getting right down to brass tacks in this war business."

"Well, you see, Eddie, I just had to. Friend wife got me into it. She's been reading all year the magazine articles, such as 'A Thousand Ways to Save on a Thousand Bones a Year,' and so when she and the kids went over to our little fruit farm in southern Michigan a month or so ago, her last words as the boat pulled out were: 'Remember, poppa, to economize!'

"Every week end I waste an hour or two trying to figure out whether it will be cheaper to stay right here in Chicago over Saturday and Sunday, or take a run over to the peach belt."

"The fare over there isn't much, is it?"

"Nope, but it isn't the fare that counts—it's the extras. Those kids of mine would raise the roof if I didn't bring every last one of them a present. Then I have to doll up a little myself, and by the time I get a new panama and a silk shirt or some other little trifle, a ten-spot has the mumps."

"But can't you do your own cooking?"

"That's exactly what I'm doing. With results. The morning after the folks went away, I was prowling round in the kitchen, and I ran across a big blue bowl full of breakfast food. 'Some new sample,' I chuckled. After I'd figured out that it was a free sample, and hadn't cost a cent, I felt justified in flooding it with sugar and cream. Then I went after it right with a big spoon, but I couldn't chew the stuff. It seemed so lifeless, like cork, you know. Just then I caught sight of a note in my wife's handwriting: 'Be sure to look in the big blue bowl and plant the seeds I've put in to soak so's they'll germinate quickly. They're your favorite—Benshaw's beets.' "

"And then what?"

"I changed my order to berries, and rummaged around in the pantry for some powdered sugar, and at last, I found about a nickel's worth in a little sack."

"You were lucky."

"Lucky! I was that! The powdered sugar was powdered cream of tartar—that's why I exploded."

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Financier—"A blackmailer, I'm afraid."

Friend—"Impossible! What makes you think so?"

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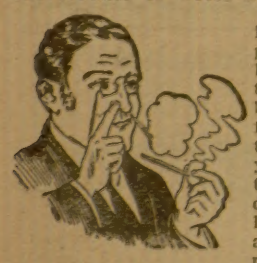

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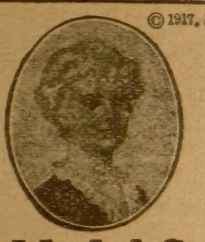

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE GAP IN THE NET.

WHILE Willie was sleeping the sleep of those who have done their duty and await the decision of the gods with a clear conscience, Doctor Stackpole and Corinne Hurd were speeding toward New York, safe from observation, as one can be only in a high-powered car lost in the long procession of city-bound traffic. At first they moved swiftly, traversing the spaces, rapidly growing shorter and fewer in number, of open roadways between the towns strung thickly along the old Boston post-road to New York; but further on the increasing congestion compelled a slower pace.

When they reached the citadel of the great city, they seemed to have many errands to execute, each of which ate up many of the hungry minutes. Finally, however, just as Linda was looking at her watch doubtfully, counting the minutes of rest that she might still permit Willie to claim, Doctor Stackpole stopped the car near the portals of the great building that housed the Fidelity Company. Two minutes later he sent in his name to Mr. Harvey.

Harvey was up to his ears in work and was far over his head in suspense as to the working out of Willie's scheme, with the outlines of which he was acquainted, but with the details of which he had not been made conversant. Momentarily he was expecting De Nemours to arrive in answer to his letter, but he was not expecting Doctor Stackpole, and when he got his card he was both startled and amazed. Since the day of the exhumation he had scarcely seen him—had, in fact, rather avoided seeing him. Could he have come in place of De Nemours? Had his coming anything to do with Willie's plans?

Nor was his curiosity lessened by the announcement of the office boy that the Doctor had brought "a loidy" with him. Nevertheless he nodded calmly.

"Show Doctor Stackpole and the lady in," he directed, and resumed his work.

A moment later, at the sound of the closing door and of footsteps nearing his desk, he looked up. Then he jumped to his feet, gasping, amazed at the sight of Corinne standing, uninvited, in his office.

He had never seen her, but he guessed her identity instantly. In that company, under the circumstances, he knew without telling that the pale but wonderfully beautiful woman who faced him could be no one but Corinne de Nemours—the one around whom at that very minute he had supposed that the cords of Willie's net were slowly tightening. As he went forward to meet her his brain buzzed with unanswered questions. What was this woman doing in his office? Why had Doctor Stackpole brought her? Had she glimpsed the toils of Willie's net and evaded or broken thru them? Or had she come in utter unconsciousness that she was escaping a trap? Did she—and Doctor Stackpole—come in peace or in war? He would have felt much more at ease if De Nemours had arrived, or if he knew that the pretended Belgian was really coming.

Nevertheless, he bowed to Doctor Stackpole with no apparent disquietude, and turned expectantly to Corinne, awaiting the introduction that must come. Then, as the Doctor hesitated, boggling over his words, he spoke.

"This is Mrs. Hurd, isn't it?" he asked.

Instantly the Doctor found his tongue. "No, not Mrs. Hurd," he said. "She never was Mrs. Hurd. For a few hours she bore the name of a dying man, Harry Harkness. But now"—he smiled down at the woman beside him—"now she is Mrs. Stackpole."

Harvey caught his breath. Never Mrs. Hurd? For a few hours Mrs. Harkness? Now Mrs. Stackpole. It was too much to come all at once. Harvey's brain swam with the effort to comprehend. One thing, however, he knew without deliberate thought, and that was if she had never been Mrs. Hurd, the Fidelity owed her no half-million dollars for Harry Hurd's death. His heart leaped at the thought.

However, one thing at a time. "Congratulations!" he cried, grasping the Doctor's hand. An enormous relief spoke in his voice. "Congratulations, Mrs. Stackpole. When—when were you married?"

"Half an hour ago, on the way from Rochpelle." It was the Doctor who answered. "Our first act was to come here to clear up the Hurd case as far as we can."

"That's good." Harvey was realizing more and more that he had been saved from a tremendous loss. His delight bubbled over. "That's good," he repeated. "I wish I could pay you the Hurd insurance as a wedding present, Mrs. Stackpole; but I guess the company will want to keep the money for itself."

Corinne did not smile. Instead she paled. "Yes!" she said. "I suppose it will. But can it? I do not know. I fear—ah! But I fear——"

Harvey's spirits suffered a dampening. "Fear?" he exclaimed. "But—but—if you were never Mrs. Hurd—if Hurd was not married——"

"No! I was never Mrs. Hurd. But if Mr. Hurd have no wife the money goes to his heirs, is it not so?"

"Ye-es, but—good Heavens!" Harvey broke off. "Come and sit down," he interjected. "I guess I was a little previous. Come and tell me—what you have come to tell."

Corinne bowed and sat down, and the others followed her example. Then she leaned forward and spoke. "You will pardon if that I speak of myself a little first," she said. "It is necessaire. My mother was American; my father French; and I was born in Brussels. So I did not lie altogether when I said that I am Belgian. My stepfather—he whom you know as my father—is English; he have marry my mother in secondes noces when I am 12 years old. Soon I find that my mother is unhappy, but it is not until long after that I learn that she is unhappy because she have discover that her husband is a swindler and a thief. Nevertheless, she cling to him. And she tells me nothing. No doubt she means to tell me later. And then she die, when I am 17. At the last she try to tell me something—later I think that she want to warn me. But it is too late. She cannot speak. So—I am left alone, not yet a woman, with him whom I call mon pere. And they tell me I am beautiful!"

Harvey wanted to nod emphatic assent, but he did not dare. The woman's tones were too sad.

"He was not unkind to me at first. I give him the full credit. He provide me with all that I need, and he do not ask me to help in his schemes. I know now that it was because he did not need me; and perhaps because he thought he would find a better market for me when that I was full grown. But he train me—me unknowing. And at the last he use me—use my looks to attract men to his net. It was long before I find out what he does—long before I learn what he is, learn that he is a rogue, as my mother had found him to be long before. At last I discover and rebel. Then he put on the screws. He tell me that I must obey—that years before my mother have rebel, too, and then have yield—as I must yield. And I do yield, monsieur. What else could I do? I have no one to go to for help; he have taken good care for that. I am not 20; and I am brought up as a French girl and not as one of your self-reliant Americans. Besides, for years I have obey him and I am accustom to do so. So I yield. Already, unknowing, I have been the lure by which he attract his prey; now I continue to be so when I do know it. He make me a party to his cheats and his swindles. But he does nothing more. Perhaps the memory of my mother protect me from worse. Perhaps he holds me for a better price. I do not know. I know only that except that he force me to be his bait, he ask nothing more. But I suffer under it, monsieur. Ah! But I suffer. My mother have taught me to be honest, and—again and again I protest. For a time he laugh; then he threaten—he threaten terrible things—and at last I accept my fate."

The woman's tones had grown lower and lower. At last they were almost inaudible.

Harvey sought to interpose. "Rest a while," he suggested. "Later you——"

But Corinne forced back the agitation that was overpowering her. "But, no!" she said. "No! I must finish now. There is no time to lose. Later you will understand." Resolutely she straightened herself and went on. "Then came the breaking out of the great war. We are in Belgium then; but we flee to England—just in time. There we meet Cockney John and Harry Harkness, whom we have known before. We have almost no money and we live by our wits for a time. Then the police find us out and order us from England. They have no charge to bring against us, but they know who we are and they order us to leave England. We decide to come to America. Me, I am glad. I long to see my mother's birthplace. We combine our money and buy first-class passage for mon pere and for myself, so that perhaps we may find some rich American to swindle en route. Cockney John and Mr. Harkness travel by third-class because there is not money enough for them to go first.

"On the boat we meet Mr. Hurd. I think that I need not tell all. You may guess, monsieur. Mr. Hurd was rich, generous, inexperienced. He do me the honor to fall in love with me. So I help to rob him. Ah! But it shames me to think of it! He ask me to marry him; mon pere insists that I shall accept. I think I need but to pretend, as I have done before. So I promise. But trouble arises. Mr. Harkness grows jealous when he hear that Mr. Hurd seeks me. He has no right to object. But he does so. He threatens to make trouble. Mon pere warn me and I go to see him. Mr. Hurd have supply us with plenty of money and I give it to Mr. Harkness. He is ill, tho I do not guess how ill. I take advantage and persuade him to go away—far away. I promise to join him as soon as we shall finish our robbery of Mr. Hurd. He goes. Then I find that mon pere means that I shall indeed marry Mr. Hurd. I do not love him. But I am tired of the life I lead. I long to be respectable. Mon pere swear that when I shall get him the money that he want he will go away and leave me forever. So I yield.

"We plan for the wedding. It is to be at Mr. Hurd's house. The minister arrives; all is ready.

"Then Mr. Harkness come back. He have read in the paper on the train that I go to marry Mr. Hurd; and he comes back. Then——

"I know not what happens then, monsieur. I am in the grand salon talking with the minister when mon pere and Harry Harkness come in together. Figure to yourself my surprise. Nearly I faint. But mon pere carries things with a high hand. He whispers to me that I must marry Mr. Harkness at once. I refuse. But it is hard to refuse mon pere. He has a will! Ah! Yes! But a will! He insist! He threaten—and I yield. Later I find that the minister think that he marry me to Mr. Hurd. He is nearly blind and he cannot see. Beside the

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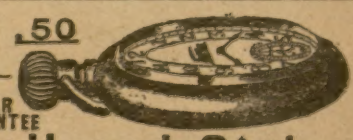

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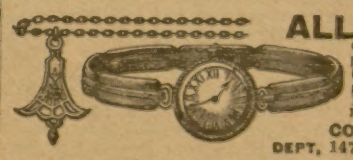
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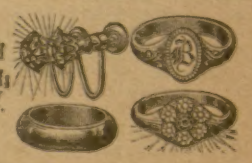
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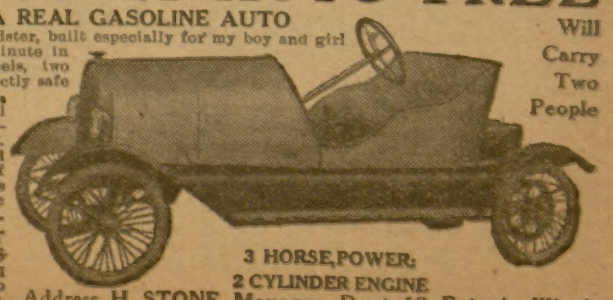
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lights are turn down. Then we go away.

"Mr. Harkness everywhere gives his name as Hurd. He pretends to be Harry Hurd. We meet no one that knows him and we pass unsuspected.

"But very quickly he grow ill. Ah! But he grow ill. Before we have travel a single hour he is very ill. But he refuse to stop or to go back. He say that it will ruin everything if he do so. He insist that we go on. So we go. Ah! what a night! A dozen times I think he die. At last we reach Chicago. We go to the hotel. The doctors come. They fight for his life. But they lose. Soon I am a widow that has never been a wife.

"What am I to do? With his last breath my husband have charge me to say that he is Harry Hurd—not Harry Harkness. So—I do so. I am bewilder—distract. I telegraph to mon pere. I talk to the doctors. Then I come back to mon pere.

"And now, for the first time, I learn that Mr. Hurd have made for me a so huge insurance policy. I ask where Mr. Hurd is. Mon pere refuse to tell me. I ask where he has vanish to on the night of the wedding. He refuse to tell me. He say that in the eyes of the world I am the widow of Mr. Hurd, and that I shall collect the insurance and shall own huge wealth. All that I have to do is to know nothing and say nothing. He terrifies me. His face is that of a demon. I dare not refuse. I promise. It is very wrong, but—I promise!

"Then comes my dear husband"—Corinne turned to Doctor Stackpole—"and for the first time in all my life I know what it is to love. I see how wicked I have been, and for his sake I resolve to cease my wickedness for evermore. Today I confess all to him. I do not hope that he will forgive me, but he does forgive. He does more. He offers me his love. Mon Dieu! On my knees I thank God for it! He say that I am not wicked, that I have act under compulsion. He ask me to be marry with him at once—on the moment; then, he say, we come to you and tell all. I wish not to betray mon pere. But I have learn much in the last few days. I have learn that things go not well—that mon pere is mad with terror—that perhaps he have done murder—two murders——"

"Two murders? Who?" Harvey's excitement broke all bonds.

"Harry Harkness and Harry Hurd. I suspect——"

"Me, too! Good Lord! I must tell Willie! I must tell her of this. It will change all her plans. I must——" Harvey broke off and grabbed the telephone. "Yes! Hello! Give me Rochpelle, police headquarters. Quick, for God's sake, Central!"

A moment later, learning that Willie was not at headquarters, he called up Doctor Maybury's. Long and impatiently he waited. But no answer came. "Try again, Central," he implored. "Try again. It's very important."

Central tried. Again and again she tried. But at last her patience was exhausted. "Say! You ain't got any lease on this wire," she decided. "Other folks want to use it. Your people don't answer. See!" A click, and the wire fell silent.

Harvey said something beneath his breath. Then he turned to Doctor Stackpole and Corinne. "They don't answer," he said. "We're too late. I was afraid we'd be. It's a pity, too, for she was laying a trap for you."

"For me?" Corinne leaned forward and clutched at the table with trembling fingers. "She lay a trap for me. Mon Dieu, we must reach her! We must do something. It may be life and death. Mon pere is mad with terror. If he fall into her trap he will kill——"

"Kill Willie?" Harvey's voice quivered. "Good God!" he cried. "You don't mean that?"

"Why not? You say this Willie has laid a trap for me. It will not catch me. But it may catch my villain of a stepfather. And if it catches him he will kill. Oh! You know him not. The years that I have suffered under him—I and my mother. He will kill, I tell you, monsieur—kill!"

Harvey's face whitened. "He can't kill Willie!" he insisted. "Willie'll take precautions. She'll—she'll——Oh, my God!" Harvey sprang to his feet. "If I only knew where to reach her!"

Corinne leaned forward. "But surely you know her plans," she insisted.

"I know them, yes; in a way. If I were at Rochpelle——But I am not at Rochpelle."

Corinne sprang to her feet. "Within the hour we can arrive there," she cried. "But yes! My car waits below. Come! Let us go. We may still be in time."

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Toward the door she hurried; and after her raced the two men!

CHAPTER XX.

A "CELESTIAL" VICTORY.

FIFTEEN minutes before Harvey had called up the Maybury home and had got no reply, Linda went to the couch on which Willie lay sleeping and gazed down at her. Sleep had chased away the sharp anxious lines that the last ten days had graved on the girl detective's face and had brought back the buoyant youth that had been hiding behind them. Linda caught her breath as she looked.

"Why! She's only a girl, after all," she breathed. "Only a girl. And I thought she was a worldly-wise woman! She oughtn't to be doing this sort of work. She's too good for it. She ought to be married—and have children. She might——" Linda sighed. "And here I've got to wake her and send her back to her labors," she added.

With a sigh she bent down and touched the recumbent girl. "It's time to wake, Willie," she said. Then as the girl opened her eyes, she went on: "The papers with Tom's story will reach Rochpelle in half an hour."

Willie yawned dreadfully. Then she sat up. "Oh! I needed that sleep," she rejoiced. "It's done me so much good." Wabblingly she rose. "Come! Let's go," she said. "Have you anything to lock up before we start?"

Linda shook her head. "Everything's locked," she replied. "Everybody's out but us. I'm quite ready."

Side by side the girls descended the steps and left the house. A moment later they were in Willie's limousine rolling swiftly away. Later, when they were quite out of earshot, the telephone rang.

Unknowing and unsuspecting, Willie's car sped on, carrying its burden of high hopes. A few minutes later, just as dusk was beginning to gather, it halted outside the office of the Rochpelle News Company, where earlier in the afternoon the chauffeur had sought out the exuberant Jimmie. Now, without directions, he got down from his box, went into the office and returned a moment later with an armful of Gazettes, which he handed in to Willie. Then he climbed back on the box and started away.

Inside the car Willie pounced upon the paper, seeking the story.

It was not hard to find. Beneath huge headlines it screamed at her from the place of honor on the first page of the paper. "Ghost at Rochpelle. Specter of bridegroom returns. Identified by lifelong acquaintance." Beneath ran the story:

"Rochpelle, Sept. 23.—This town is in a ferment over the reputed return from the grave of a certain young millionaire who recently died of heart disease on his wedding trip. The specter has been seen by many persons of unimpeachable veracity to rise out of the waters of the Sound just off a strip of land known as Benson's Beach, that lies near the cemetery where the young bridegroom's body now rests and half a mile from the ancestral home where he had spent his life. No reason why he should haunt this stretch of water is known, but the fact that he does is undisputable and has given rise to many curious if vague imaginings. He is nearly always seen there about dusk."

There was more of the story—much more—but Willie did not stop to read it. Excitedly she clutched Linda's arm. "Look! Look! Look!" she cried. "Bully for Tom Williams. Oh! Bully for him. Benson's Beach is where Cockney John said they sank the body. Oh! Linda! Linda! If it only works! If it only works!"

Linda did not speak, and Willie, glancing at her quickly, understood and cried out in quick contrition. "Oh! Forgive me, dear!" she begged. "I forgot. I'm always forgetting how terribly this comes home to you. I get so worked up——"

"I'm glad you do." Linda dragged the words out with an effort that took all her strength. "I'm glad you do. It makes me feel more confident of victory. I—I won't break down again."

Willie patted the other's arm. "Brave girl!" she cried. "Brave girl! Hello! We're here. Where's Pat?"

She did not need to ask twice, for on the instant the door of the car flew open and Pat Riley thrust in his face. "Sure, it's here I am, Miss Willie." he cried. "They haven't come back yet at all."

"Good." Willie's face gleamed with excitement. "They can't be long now. Here are the papers, Pat. You know what you've got to do. Don't get excited. Keep cool. Wait till Mrs. Hurd does come back. If she's alone sell her a paper at once. If Doctor Stackpole is with her, wait a few minutes to see whether he won't go away. Then, whether he goes or not, begin to shout your papers and keep it up till Mrs. Hurd sends for one. Then hide somewhere and watch the house to see whether she leaves it. If she does, follow her. If you get a chance, let me know. But don't let her see you and don't let her get away from you! Follow her wherever she leads you. I've got to trust a lot to your Irish wit; don't fail me."

"I won't, Miss Willie."

The boy drew back and closed the door of the car. As, papers beneath his arm, he turned toward the entrance of the Hurd place, half a block away, the automobile started down the cross street that led to Benson's Beach and the waters of the Sound.

Slowly Pat walked toward the Hurd entrance. If he had had his own way he would have run with winged feet. But Willie had cautioned him to show no excitement, and he was resolved to obey orders, both because, like every boy who knew her, he loved Willie Blunt and because, also like every other boy, he cherished an enormous admiration for detectives and an enormous longing to act as one.

Close to the Hurd gate he sat down on the curb and waited. The minutes sped by. To his eager pulses they sped very slowly. For the first ten minutes he waited eagerly, thinking that every moment would bring the Hurd car. For another ten he waited indignantly; at the end of the third ten he resigned himself to wait as philosophically as his Celtic temperament would permit.

Then abruptly somebody spoke into his ear. "Give me a paper, boy," said the some one.

Pat scrambled to his feet, automatically pulling a paper from the sheaf as he did so. Then, midway, he halted.

He was looking at M. de Nemours. He knew him at once. Willie had taken care that he should be able to know him.

"I've tried to get him away, Pat," she said, "for I'd rather have Mrs. Hurd get the paper when she is alone, and I'd rather keep it out of M. de Nemours' hands altogether. But, of course, that may not be possible. He may be at home, or he may come home, and he may have got the paper somewhere else. So I'm not staking much on his not getting one. But don't force it on him."

Pat's mind worked like lightning as he stood hesitating. Sharply he blamed himself for having let the counterfeit Belgian come upon him unawares. He had been watching for a woman in an auto and not for a man on foot. Still, he ought to have kept his eyes open; now it was too late to save the situation without perhaps arousing suspicions that would be worse than anything that could result from surrendering the paper.

So he passed one over, took the cent that De Nemours tendered, and walked on. But he watched results out of the tail of his eye.

De Nemours started toward the entrance gate. As he walked he glanced at the paper casually, then stopped with a gasp that reached Pat's attentive ears. For a moment he stood, head thrust forward, scanning the paper with bulging eyes. Then his hands dropped and he fairly ran in at the gate and up the driveway.

Pat saw it all from the corner of his eye. For an instant he hesitated, then ran to the gate, dropped half his papers beneath a friendly bush for use if he should come back, and sped up the driveway, carrying the other half with him to serve as an excuse if need should arise to explain his presence. From bush to bush he dodged, striving to keep out of sight of his quarry.

The precaution seemed unnecessary. De Nemours neither paused nor looked back; straight up the drive he raced and burst in at the door.

Close to the house Pat stooped behind a friendly bush and waited, heart in mouth, for what might happen.

From where he crouched he could trace De Nemours' progress thru the house and from floor to floor, partly by the sound of his hurrying steps; partly by his calls for "Corinne," which sounded thru one window after another; and partly by the sound of overturned furniture.

Suddenly the noise of the man's movements stopped and was not resumed. Pat's heart came into his mouth as he listened.

Then, abruptly, the slam of a closing door at the back of the house reached his ears. Reckless of consequence, he stood up and peered over his bush, just in time to see De Nemours quartering across the lawn behind the house.

Pausing for only long enough to throw one of his papers on the doorstep for Mrs. Hurd, in case she should return, Pat followed, this time more boldly than before, guessing that De Nemours was too much excited to suspect that he himself might be under observation.

In this he was right. De Nemours raced on regardlessly, vaulted the fence at the back, and then, slowing down a little, he hastened on toward the Sound, which lay well back, across the back of the house.

The dusk fell swiftly as man and boy went on. Beneath the trees it was almost dark, but beyond their shelter, on the beach, the light still shimmered along the lapping water, silvery against the gray of the sky.

De Nemours strode down to the edge of the sand and stood staring out over the pulsing waters. Long he stared, then laughed harshly. Pat, close behind him in the bushes, heard and wondered. Once more he stared and again he laughed. "Liars!" he muttered. "Liars!" and turned away.

Then, far out in the water, something splashed.

Sharply the man wheeled back, glaring. Pat, behind him, glared, too. Something was rising from the water—something that had not been there before—the head of a man. Slowly it came shoreward—slowly but steadily, rising above the water as it came. Soon it took unto itself shoulders and then a trunk, growing steadily till half its

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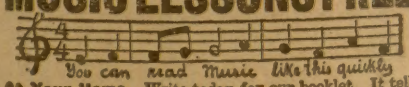
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body had risen from the water. So near was it that the ghastly white face showed like a moon beneath the drenched hair. Then, abruptly, De Nemours snatched a pistol from his pocket and fired, once, twice—five times. Unheeding, the figure came on; and De Nemours, with a strangled cry, flung down his smoking pistol and fled away.

He did not look back. Had he done so he might have seen the ghost running shoreward thru the water in most unghostlike fashion.

He might have seen Pat, pale with superstitious terror but half suspecting that the ghost was not quite so deadly as it appeared, run out of the bushes, just in time to meet Linda running in from the other side. But he saw none of this. Fear—or something else—drove him on. In a moment he vanished.

But not unfollowed. Linda had seen Pat and welcomed him joyfully. "After him, Pat!" she gasped. "After him. You can go faster than I."

Pat stared. "But——" he stuttered, sweeping his hand toward the ghost, now near at hand.

"Never mind. It's all right. Go! Quick."

Pat darted away on the trail, and Linda panted after him as fast as she could. She had expected to hurry forward to receive the confession of a terrified woman; she had not bargained for a footrace with a man.

Meanwhile the "ghost" had reached the shore, and was also running on the trail. But it did not run long nor far. Scarcely a hundred feet from the beach an auto rustled from the bushes and stopped beside it. Quickly it looked up, revealing, beneath a coating of paint and powder, the face of Willie Blunt. "After them, James!" she gasped, as she dived inside. "After them!" Then, as the auto moved off, she swiftly flung aside her sodden garments and began to array herself in others.

A few moments later the auto stopped suddenly and Linda clamored at the door. "Pat's treed him, Willie!" she cried. "He went into a house a little way from here. Pat's watching! Come quick!"

Willie did not appear. But her voice came out of the darkened interior. "Go back to Pat," she ordered. "I'll join you in a minute. Go on! Don't wait for me."

"All right." Linda hurried away.

Close beside a small brick house with boarded shutters Linda found Pat waiting. "Is he still there?" she gasped.

The boy nodded. "Yes. He's there. Oh, Miss Linda! What's it all mean?"

"I don't know. Miss Willie has kept her plans to herself, but she expects to find something big. Only she expected Mrs. Hurd, not M. de Nemours. Hush! Who's that?" With a start she faced round.

Behind the two a Chinaman was approaching, trotting toward them on almost soundless heels. He showed no surprise at sight of Linda and the boy, but hurried on without slackening his pace. Straight to the door of the boarded house he went and mounted the steps.

Appalled, amazed, Linda ran out into the open road, staring back for Willie. "Oh! Where is she?" she cried. "Why doesn't she come? . . . Listen. There she comes. I hear her auto."

Beyond a doubt an auto was coming. It was passing. Then, at the last moment it stopped with a crash of gears and of brakes. From it leaped Harvey, Doctor Stackpole and Corinne.

Harvey grabbed Linda by the shoulder. "Where is she?" he cried. "Where is Willie?"

"I don't know."

"Don't know? Good God! If——"

"I'm waiting for her now. We traced M. de Nemours to the house yonder." Linda pointed. "Willie told us to come on and watch. Then a Chinaman came up. See! He's there on the doorstep. He hasn't gone in yet."

As Linda pointed, the door of the house swung open and a broad stream of light, pouring out, illuminated the unmistakable Chinese costume of the figure that stood without the door. Plainly the listeners heard the Celestial give greeting.

"Me come cookee for you," he said. "Missee send me for you. She say you come pretty dam quick. Dinner gettee cold."

"Aaaah!" Quick as thought De Nemours sprang back, flinging the door into the speaker's face as he did so.

But the Celestial was too quick. Into the gap he hurled himself, while, behind him, Harvey and Doctor Stackpole raced up.

Over the Chinaman's shoulders De Nemours saw them and abandoned his attempt to shut the door. Instead, he turned and fled backward thru the house toward an inner door from which a light was streaming. Into this he sprang.

The Celestial, staggering forward from the sudden cessation of pressure, sprang after him. Almost as soon as De Nemours he reached the door. Behind came the two men.

Inside the room, in a chair, gagged and bound, sat a man. Toward him sprang De Nemours, knife in hand. "D—n you!" he screamed. "I thought I saw your ghost! By Heaven, I'll see it now!" He whirled the dagger high.

An automatic in the Chinaman's hand barked, and the knife fell harmlessly to the floor, while De Nemours staggered back, clasping his right wrist with his left hand. The Chinaman covered him with the pistol. "Hands up!" he ordered sternly.

A scream rent the air. Inward, between Stackpole and Harvey, burst Linda and ran to the man in the chair.

"Oh, Harry! Harry!" she cried. "You're alive! You're alive! You're alive! Oh! Thank God! You're alive." With trembling fingers she tore at the knotted cords that bound him.

Frantic with fears for Willie, Harvey scarcely paused to recognize Harry Hurd. Like a demon he turned on De Nemours.

"Willie!" he cried. "Where is she? If you've hurt her——"

Raucously De Nemours laughed. "Hurt hell!" he gritted. "She's hurt me, d—n her!" Like the stroke of a snake his uninjured left hand shot out and grabbed the skull-cap of the Chinaman and tore it from its place, revealing the brown-gold hair and dancing curls of Wilhelmina Blunt. "There she is!" he roared. "She's been fooling me from the first! If I'd guessed—if I'd guessed——"

Willie shrank back, laughing, but not taking her eyes from De Nemours or letting the muzzle of her automatic deviate an inch from his person. "Not quite from the first," she said, "but very near it." Then she turned to Corinne, who was standing in the doorway. "Step over beside your 'father,' Mrs. Hurd," she ordered sternly.

Harvey and Doctor Stackpole both started forward. But it was Harvey who spoke.

"It's all right, Willie," he said. "Mrs. Stackpole has told us——Yes! She's Mrs. Stackpole—she's told us everything. It was Harry Harkness who died in Chicago. She isn't quite sure how it all happened——"

"I'll tell you." Harry Hurd staggered to his feet. "I overheard that devil"—he pointed to De Nemours—"talking to a man I had never seen before. I overheard enough to tell me that I had been a fool. I burst in and told De Nemours so. He came toward me and I saw death in his eyes. I fled to the den and locked the door and called to Linda for help. Then he broke in and—and—we fought. I don't remember any more."

"We can guess the rest." Doctor Stackpole slipped his arm around Corinne's shaking shoulders. "I suppose De Nemours kept Hurd a prisoner here until Miss Blunt tricked him into leading the way to his hiding-place. Come away, dear. It's all right. Isn't it, Miss Blunt?"

Willie nodded. "Sure!" she said. "I sent Pat for the chief of police—and for Mr. Williams; and here they come. The chief will take charge of De Nemours."

* * * * * * * *

Two minutes later the others had gone, and only Willie and Harvey lagged in the deserted house.

Harvey smiled at the pygmy figure in the Chinese costume. "You've won out, Willie," he said. "And now that you've won—by Celestial aid—I suppose you'll want to go on and be a great detective instead of letting me make a home for you."

Willie shook her head. "Oh, Fred, Fred!" she said. "You wouldn't ask me that if you knew how hard I'd been working to win my release. A home—such as you'd make—looks mighty good to me. In fact, it looks 'Celestial.'"

With a contented sigh she walked into Harvey's arms and laid her head upon his shoulder.

The End.

Little Fellow's Pal.

Sometimes one wonders if, after all, these stories about the child who asks so many questions have not another side.

The other day coming down in the Fifth avenue 'bus a little fellow about 8 was asking his mother the usual string of questions about everything under the sun. But to the surprise of the other passengers the usual reply, "Oh, my dear, don't ask so many questions," was not forthcoming. In this case mother was right there.

"Mother, why does a little automobile rattle more than a big one?"

The passengers smiled, but mother replied promptly:

"Because the big car is heavier."

"Mother, look at the lady soldier. Is she goin' to war?"

"No, son; that is a Campfire Girl." Here followed a detailed account of the activities of that organization.

"Look, mom, at the officer. Does he ride on horseback?"

"No, dear; you can tell by the insignia on his sleeve that he belongs to the artillery."

By this time the passengers were gazing with much interest at a lady who could actually answer a little boy's questions. Then came a poser as the 'bus trundled past a downtown club where the flags of all the nations who are fighting with the Allies were fluttering.

"Name 'em, mom," commanded the boy.

And mom did—every one, from the flag of Cuba on thru to England and France.

A gray-haired man gazed thoughtfully after the pair as they alighted, the youngster still chattering and gazing eagerly into his mother's serene face.

"I wish my kid had a pal like that," he said wistfully to a friend.

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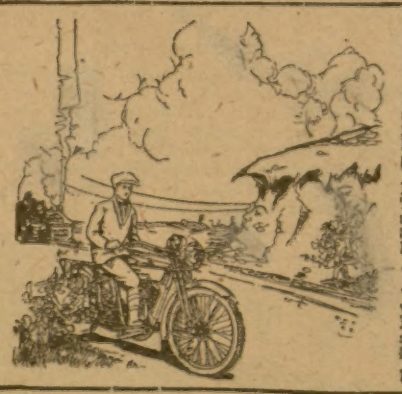

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His Extravagance.

"Do you believe that time is money?"
"Yes."
"I thought so. It's about the only thing you ever spend."

TAXICABARET.

"Tax the honey, but not the bee;"
Tax the bitten, but not the flea;
Tax producing, consuming free;
Tax anybody, O Lord, but me!

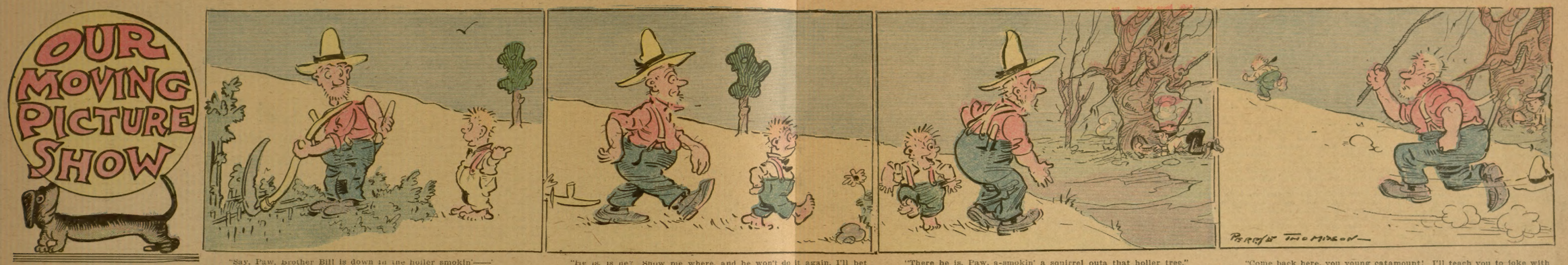
JUMPING AT CONCLUSIONS

REVISED KENTUCKY CREED.

Rye bread when I'm hungry,
Water when I'm dry,
Fifty-cent dollars when I'm hard up—
I might as well go die!

Knows 'Em All.

"She's an entertaining conversationalist."
"She seems to know the faults and shortcomings of everybody."



"Say, Paw, Brother Bill is down in the holler smokin'——"

"He is, is he? Show me where, and he won't do it again, I'll bet ye!"

"There he is, Paw, a-smokin' a squirrel outa that holler tree."

"Come back here, you young catamount! I'll teach you to joke with yer Paw!"

Inarticulate Love.

"That young fellow has been in the parlor with my daughter four hours now. I wonder what they find to talk about?"

"They don't talk. She gurgles and he cks."

"Do you extract teeth without pain?"
"What's your business?"
"I'm a pugilist."
"No, I don't."

Definition.

"What is war?"
"We all know the real definition," replied the diplomat. "But if you want to be polite and scholarly you might say that war is a series of overt acts, definitely resented."

Easily Detected.

"Smith could never misrepresent his goods, for such a trick could be easily seen thru."
"What kind of goods does he sell?"
"Window glass."

RHYME CRIMES.

Now the little lambs are skipping,
Growing into woolly sheep;
Now the women all are knitting,
Sockses for the soldiers' feet.

In the shops the shell game rushes,
Things are being done on time,
And the farmer burns the bushes,
Making room for plant and vine.

Private feuds are all forgotten
In the Nation's mighty war,
Former enemies are hopping
Now aboard Bellona's car.

Shall I join the hosts of battle?
Sword and rifle shall I bear?
With the foeman shall I grapple?
No, I have a wooden ear?

Without a Twinge.

A tourist while "doing" California noticed a long shanty which displayed the following sign: "Teeth yanked out without a twinge." As he happened to be suffering from toothache, he entered the shanty and asked the "dentist":

"Do you extract teeth without giving pain?"

"Waal, I reckon so, stranger."

"All right; pull this one out"—pointing to the offending molar.

The "dentist" whistled, and in walked his assistant, armed with a club.

"Now, pard," quoth the "dentist," "stun him!"

His Strong Point.

"Is your husband much of a provider, Malindy?"

"He jes' ain't nothin' else, ma'am. He gwine to git some new furniture providin' he gits de money; he gwine to git de money providin' he go to work; he go to work providin' de job suits him. I never see such a providin' man in all mah days."

Spoiled the Show.

"Going to have a donkey show this year?" asked the lounger of the London cockney.

"No blooming fear! 'Taint no good in these times, since the no treating act come in."

"Why, how's that? The no treating law doesn't affect donkeys, does it?"

"No, but it's kind of put a damper on everything like. It's spoilt the show, and the supper afterwards, and also the chairman's speech."

"Spoilt his speech?"

"Yus. It's like this, y'see. Our ol' chairman's always given the same speech every year for nigh on ten years, an' a very clever speech it was. An' now he won't be able to use it, an' 'e's gettin' old like an' can't work up another."

"Oh really! And what was the speech?"

"Well, 'e uster git up an' say: 'Boys, it's bin a fine show, and I'm glad to see yer. Now order in whatever yer wants and 'ave 'em all wiv me!'"

Cholly—"I think I can mesmerize you. First fix your mind on nothing."

Ethel—"I'm thinking of you; go ahead."

Took the Coat.

Charles B. Towns, the anti-drug champion, spent some time in China several years ago with Samuel Merwin, the writer. In a Hongkong shop window they noticed some Chinese house coats of particularly striking designs, and stepped in to purchase them.

Mr. Towns asked Mr. Merwin to do the bargaining.

"Wantum coatee," said Mr. Merwin to the sleepy-eyed Oriental, who shuffled up with a grunt. He placed several of the coats before them.

"How muchee Melican monee?" inquired Mr. Merwin.

"It would aid me in transacting this sale," said the Chinaman, "if you would confine your language to your mother tongue. The coat is $7."

Mr. Merwin took it.

Not Stolen.

Few things have suffered a bigger smack from the desolating hand of war than wood. At the present time a bundle of firewood of most delicate physique costs a penny.

A watchman was discovered asleep minus his wooden leg and a friendly wayfarer awoke him, exclaiming:

"Hey man, they've stolen your leg."

The sleeper sat up and glowered.

"Did ye think," said he sarcastically, "that I wud gang tae sleep in this locality wi' onything aboot me for burnin'? The wife taks awa' ma leg every nicht and brings it back i' the mornin."

He Knew the Rules.

A young man fell into a state of coma, but recovered before his friends had buried him. One of them asked what it felt like to be dead.

"Dead!" he exclaimed. "I wasn't dead. And I knew I wasn't, because my feet were cold and I was hungry."

"But how did that make you sure?"

"Well, I knew that if I were in heaven I shouldn't be hungry, and if I was in the other place my feet wouldn't be cold."

What It Proved.

A quack doctor was holding forth his medicines to a rural audience.

"Yes, gentlemen," he said, "I have sold these pills for twenty-five years, and never heard a word of complaint. Now, what does that prove?"

Voice in crowd:

"That dead men tell no tales."

At the Ball.

"I see Flubdub escorting his wife to the conservatory. Since they are seeking a secluded nook, they are evidently still in love."

"You can't tell. They are going in there to finish a quarrel, I rather think."

Ma Knows It.

"Ma, what is the goose step?"

"Your father demonstrates it every time he dances with me."

Reason Enough.

Neighbor—"Hallo, Jenkins! How are you? Haven't seen you in the garden for quite a time, and you never come and see the wife and me now. Why is that?"

Jenkins—"Well, the fact is, old chap, that it's not thru ill-will or bad feeling, or anything like that, you know; only you and Mrs. Possmore have borrowed so many things from me that when I see your place it makes me feel quite homesick."

A Truthful Boy.

Inquiring Lady—"How much milk does your cow give a day?"

Truthful Boy—"'Bout eight quarts, lady."

Inquiring Lady—"And how much of it that do you sell?"

Truthful Boy—"'Bout twelve quarts, lady."

Skin Deep.

No doubt Jenkins married Lobelia Genoff for love. At any rate, beauty can't have had anything to do with it. Her face would have ripened a cheese or stopped a train. One day, soon after his marriage, Jenkins met a pal and timidly asked him what he thought of Lobelia.

"Help! Don't ask me!" gasped the pal.

"Beauty is only skin deep, you know!" remonstrated Jenkins, stiffly.

"Skin 'er then, dear chap!" advised the pal. "For Heaven's sake, skin 'er!"

What Next?

"Grocery butter is so unsatisfactory, dear," said Mrs. Youngbride, "I decided today that we would make our own."

"Oh, did you?" said her husband.

"Yes; I bought a churn and ordered buttermilk to be left here regularly. Won't it be nice to have really fresh butter?"

THE HERO.

A health to the man who fights his own vice,
And fights his own vice alone!
For many a man fights another man's vice,
When he has a worse vice of his own!

And here's to the chap who minds his own biz.
No time for another he'll find;
And surely, attending strictly to his,
He'll aye have a business to mind.

And here's to the chap—yes, he's the same chap—
Who keeps to himself all his woes!
A popular chap, this trustworthy chap,
And every one's troubles he knows!

Saw His Mistake.

An old man living in South Berkshire was leading two lively calves out to early pasture in the morning. When he came to the field he tied one of the calves to one of his bootstraps and the other to the opposite bootstrap, while he opened the rickety gate. The calves ran away. When he was picked up his wife asked him:

"Didn't you know any better than to do a foolish trick like that?"

"Yes," he answered. "I hadn't been dragged four rods before I saw my mistake."

Give Us the Chance.

When Booth Tarkington was visiting Naples he was present at an eruption of Vesuvius.

"You haven't anything like that in America, have you?" said an Italian friend with pride.

"No, we haven't," replied Tarkington; "but we've got Niagara Falls that would put the d—d thing out in five minutes."

Nothing Else.

Algernon (after being accepted)—"Have you ever loved before?"

Angela—"No; I have often admired men—for their strength, courage, beauty, intelligence, or something like that, you know; but with you, Algernon, it's all love—nothing else!"

Yellow Spots—"Who said the country was goin' bone dry?"

He Knew at Once.

Mr. Stone—"I've been in this business twenty years, young man, and it's taken me just that long to realize that I don't know the first thing about it."

Mr. Harder—"That's funny! I knew it the minute I saw you!"—Judge.

Delicately Put.

"I do hope you appreciate that in marrying my daughter you marry a large-hearted girl?"

"I do, sir. And I hope she inherits those qualities from her father."

Dominic—"Why don'ta you havva him arrested for taking your peanutta and oranges?"

Angelo—"I don't know if he be a kleptomaniac of a plaina clothesa policea man!"

"BEN BOLT"—The Kid That You Were Yourself.

Don't you remember the fortune, Ben Bolt:
The fortune you left home to rear?
The fortune you left home to rear?
But each sound and each sight of the first awful night
Spurred you homeward on pinions of fear!

Bess—"Poor Grace! Her husband died of cigarettes just as she had almost enough coupons for a vanity box."

A Good Plain Cook.

A youth who contemplates matrimony in a year or two sought his married uncle and asked his advice on the subject. It was given freely and readily by the man of experience.

"My boy," said the uncle, "be sure to marry a good plain cook."

"A good plain cook, uncle?" interposed the nephew.

"By all means."

"Ahem."

"What's the matter?"

"I've seen some cooks who were also pretty."

For Future Use.

"See that man over there? He is a bombastic mutt, a windjammer nonentity, a false alarm, and an incumbrance of the earth."

"Would you mind writing all that down for me?"

"Why in the world——"

"He's my husband and I should like to use it on him some time."

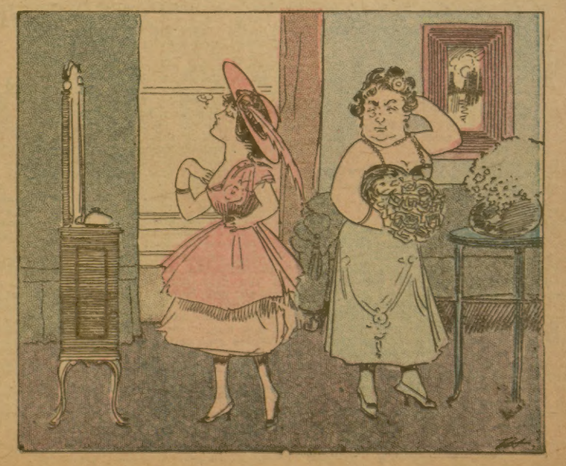
The Usual Way.

"Time is precious," said the parson.

"It is, indeed," rejoined the business man, "and I've wasted an awful lot of it."

"By indulging in foolish pleasures, I suppose?" suggested the good man.

"Not exactly," replied the other. "I wasted most of it by being punctual in keeping my appointments with others."



Edith was admiring her new frock.

"Isn't it wonderful," she said, "that all this silk comes from an insignificant worm?"

"Edith, is it necessary to refer to your father in that way?" her mother inquired reproachfully.

Old Foes Afloat

Or, The Sea Women

By William H. Manning

[Copyright 1917 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

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CHAPTER XI.

ACCORDING to Harding's order the men were pulling hard at the oars, and the boat cut rapidly into the fog. The mate was staring ahead with all senses alert to discover the strange ship.

"It can't take us long," said one of the sailors. "We know her course to a fraction."

"Are you sure of that?" the mate asked. "Do vessels always go true after a collision?"

"And such a blamed queer ship, too," added another man. "Where's her crew, anyhow? Why didn't they show themselves and do some hailing? No man was at the wheel. Who steered her? Who had spread her sails?"

"There you get it, mate," chimed in a third oarsman. "Is that an accursed ship with Death for a captain and strung bones for a crew——"

"Stow that!" snapped Harding. "No more of such nonsense. When I hunt ships I pick out live timbers and live men. Nothing else will content me. Pull on, but listen. Do you hear a voice?"

"None, sir."

"Nor I."

"Lift your oars for one instant. It seeemed to me there was an unusual sound—steady, there! I've sighted her hind foot. Bear a point to wind'ard. Lads! So! Drive her, and we'll have the stranger at our bows right away. Good! Lay me that way."

Eyesight was serving well now, and they rapidly overhauled the dark shape in the gray of fog. It loomed large against the misty bank, and Harding, never before superstitious, suddenly felt less at ease. Why did such strange conditions continue aboard the unknown ship? No man was anywhere to be seen, no voice lifted, and yet the stranger had been and still was under sail. What directed her course? If it was not mortal men, what then?

The mate found the superstition that affected the sailors getting hold of him, and he made an angry wrench at his shoulders and tried to shake the feeling off.

"We will have her in a minute, men," he said cheerfully, rather liking to hear any human voice then. "She seems to me like a vessel hard hit. She's yawning a lot, as if beset with trouble at the wheel, and has a list to starboard. I think. Reckon we raked her harder than she did us. Steady, steady! Lay us under the port quarter!"

There was reason for the choice then made. They were so near to the stranger that the hull rose high above them, and sight of a dangling rope carried its message. Once hold of it, a climber could board the craft easily.

"Hit hard, sure enough!" said a sailor. "Her foremast is gone, and the standing-rigging probably sprawls over her deck in a raffle."

"No work of ours," added one of his mates. "I noticed them things afore we struck her as we did."

"A mighty queer ship——"

"Pull me under her counter," Harding interrupted. "I want that rope that you see there. Gently, now! Good! Lay by until I call."

He grasped the rope, and clawed upward with hands moving and feet digging at the shell of the ship. Presently his head rose above the rail and the deck region was before him. The fog still held, but he could see various objects fairly well. First of all he swept the visible area in a general way, and then, seeing no sign of life, the sailor in him took full control and his gaze centered upon the wheel of the ship.

It was there, but no man held its spokes, no human being stood by, and nothing gave life to that quarter that was to a vessel what a balance-wheel was to a watch.

And yet, the craft still moved, its motion clumsy, it is true, but in spite of deep yawing and a sort of lumbering and the list that was probably new, it ate its way slowly into the fog.

"An abandoned ship in full motion of its own!"

Harding muttered the words unconsciously, and with a feeling that he was telling only a small part of the truth The sailor in him remained orderly and he rebelled at what seemed certain.

"Ahoy!" he suddenly cried, stirring into life. "Ship ahoy! Tumble up, my hearties, and let me have a look at you."

It was a definite invitation, but tho he swept hatchways and companion with keen regard, no man appeared. Yet the vessel sailed on.

He was again growing uneasy, and the impulse was strong to call to his own men and have the stoutest of them at his back in that bewitched region, but pride would not have it. Instead, he moved on his own initiative and at his own risk.

Another sweeping look showed him that the standing-rigging, damaged at certain points, was still fairly well set up, so he bore down upon the steering-gear. A part of the mystery vanished with the first survey, for he saw that the wheel was lashed, but this did not explain as he wished. It was sea-lore that a large vessel would not hold her course or her masts without a live man at the spokes, and this law of the deep was violated by conditions. How could it all be? How could this particular wooden sea traveler go about her business as no other thing of her kind was able to go?

Harding took a couple of steps beyond where he stood, and had his answer in part. Tripping, he nearly fell, but hauled himself upright and looked hard. Hitherto unseen in the fog, a dead man lay at his feet.

His hand went down in investigation, and for a moment he was inclined to doubt that death was really there. Warmth was in the body, and warmth in the pallid face, but it took no long investigation to prove that the heart had moved in its last pulsation.

Bound up in the analysis of the situation, Harding discovered that the lashing of the wheel was loose and imperfect, tho skilfully designed, and he mentally pictured the situation, past as well as present.

The man who lay lifeless had been a veteran sailor, and of great strength. Stricken in some way while at the wheel, he had clung to the spokes until the sands of his life had nearly run away, and then, doing his best to adjust the lashings, but not having life enough left to draw the ropes taut, he had fallen but a step beyond.

The moment of his collapse was recent, so recent that Harding was not sure but that he was still clinging when the two ships collided, and that it was the shock that flung him to the deck, death-smitten.

That half-formed theory also called for the belief that the sailor had seen and heard the Sea Laugh, but had not had vitality sufficient to change the course of his own vessel, nor to answer the hail from Roxford's craft, nor even to make himself seen.

Hand in hand with Death, he had clung to the wheel loyally, doing his duty until the last fragment of his physical power and mental consciousness ebbed away.

Having settled this point as far as possible, Harding turned his attention to other things. Here was a ship of about six hundred tons, a vessel so large that a small crew could navigate her only in mild weather, while a single man would be utterly lost aboard of her. The dead man could not have been alone for many hours, if at all.

Where were the rest of the crew?

Harding turned about and again took in the situation in general. He saw that the ship had an ever-increasing list, and was unnaturally deep, while her headway was almost gone. Moving quickly to the bulwark he found that his men were hanging to in the idle chase and called to them.

"Ahoy, the boat!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" was the ready response.

"This vessel is sinking, and what is done by us must be done at once. Pull this way, make the boat fast, and all hands pile aboard. We must look her over on the jump."

"Is she totally abandoned, sir?"

"Come and see. We must search below as speedily as we can. Pull hard. Lay alongside."

Turning back he found the companionway and moved downward. Once away from the deck it was a black vault, but his hope was in finding means of making a light when he reached the cabin. His wavering impressions had settled into the belief that the ship was abandoned, so he gave attention to little else, just then, but he was destined to change his mind. As he entered the cabin a voice rose in a husky note.

"When, oh, kind Providence, when—when?"

Harding stopped short, startled. The words were something, but their pitch was far more, and hardly suggestive of what was human. What, then, was there?

CHAPTER XII.

THE mate called, his voice clear but low. The strangeness of the ship was again upon him and he expected no reply, but it was the proper course to speak.

"Who is there?"

Silence! Except for the unnatural creaking of the vessel's timbers and the ugly gurgle that told of a breached hull, he had no sound beyond the natural ones of the place. Custom required that he send a second hail, and this he did, but the result was the same. Then he acted again.

Running his hands along above his head he found a lamp that was suspended from a deck-beam, and as his own matches were in his pocket he soon had a light. The blaze showed, mounted, and lighted the cabin fully.

Nobody but Harding was there.

He was about to carry his investigation to the adjoining staterooms when one of his sailors came hastily down the companion steps. He was a sturdy fellow named Loglee, and just the right man for a backer in an emergency. He looked about him critically.

"The old hooker is dipping a bit suspiciously, sir," he reported. "If I may advise, I'd say get business done with her quickly, unless you want her to plunge while you're still in her, sir."

"Right, Loglee. We will hustle. Mark the conditions here. No man to be seen, no audible stir. Search of the ship must be made as soon as possible. Take the rooms on the starboard side and look in all. Be certain nobody is there. I'll hunt the port side."

Each man went his way. Harding had chosen his way with design, believing that he had practically located the voice that sounded previously, but it was Loglee who made the first discovery. He was busy in his quarter when he sent forth a disturbed cry.

"This way, sir, this way! A berth with a man in it! This way——"

He stopped short as the mate, using long, quick steps, crossed the cabin and joined him.

"You see him, of course," Loglee pursued. "Youngish sort of a man, and a ship's officer. Don't you think so, sir?"

"He has that look. The stamp of the sea is on him. Yes, he's no passenger. Captain or mate."

Ordinarily, it would have been a peculiar exchange of words with the possible master of the vessel before them, but that man lay with closed eyes and total lack of attention.

"He's alive, but sick," the sailor went on.

"Probably unconscious."

Harding put out his hand, first touching and then gently shaking the stranger, but without result. No word came, and the eyes remained closed. Yet, the man was not dead.

"Wake up!" Harding urged. "Help has come. Listen to me! Who are you, and what can we do for you?"

"No use," Loglee murmured, after a short wait.

Harding renewed his shaking, using more force now, but with the former lack of results.

"We waste time!" exclaimed the mate. "Such a waste is criminal folly now. Let us go over all the space hereabouts, and right lively, too. Try every room. Wait! Here is this man's private light. I'll get a blaze into it and make a runaway hunt. Do what you can, Loglee."

Before their search was finished two more of the sailors appeared, and their combined efforts made it plain that nobody else of the strange ship's party was there now, living or dead. Except for the unconscious person and the dead wheelman all had disappeared.

But how, and why?

The answer was partly at hand when the full crew of the boat gathered and reported a little later. The stern of the ship showed that she was the Herman Hammond, and other things proved that she carried a cargo in her hold so abundant, that it was, in part, steeved. Her home port and destination were alike unknown then.

"Loglee," suddenly said the mate, "what do you make of the trouble of this man in the berth? What's his sickness?"

"We-e-ell, it ain't cholera nor yeller fever, nor the like of them, and from the look of his eyes when you turned the lids back, I've an idee that it may be poisoning."

"Just my theory, but a whole ship's crew could hardly be poisoned, could they?"

"I knowed of one case down on the Barbary coast, sir."

"Maybe. This can rest, tho. Carry yonder man to our boat. The ship will take her last plunge in less than a half an hour, so we must save his life and our own. Lift him and carry him carefully. What is it, Shaw?"

One of the other sailors had come down the companion.

"I just found this paper on deck, nigh the scuttle-butt, sir. It's somebody's writing, and gripping, what there is of it. There was more in the same place, but it had been ground into pulp, being wet. I should say it was dropped by accident, then just as accidentally wet by somebody when he drinked water there. After that, treading would grind it to pieces."

He was holding out a soiled sheet of writing paper. Harding received it, saw that it was partially covered with penciled words in a large, crude hand, and then read what was there. The beginning was abrupt.

"We had tried every remedy we could think of, but no good come out of it. Whatever the poison was it defied our drugs, and all the while it kept at its

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NOTE—Nuxated Iron recommended above by Dr. E. Sauer, is one of the newer organic iron compounds. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy, in nearly all forms of indigestion, as well as for nervous, run-down conditions. The Manufacturers have such great confidence in Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength 100 per cent or over in four weeks' time provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

own fiendish work. Besides the captain and the five fok'sle hands and the cook, we lost one more that mornin'. Death took Jim Cornsill, and the mate and I got the poor lad over the rail with a weight on him, carrying him to the deep o' the sea.

"That burial affected me powerful, but mainly for another reason than that I liked Jim well. Burying him, I noticed that the mate was not his old self. He lifted at the burden as if weaker than he was wont to be, and he breathed hard, and his lips looked dry. I am mortal afeerd that he is coming down with the epidemic, poison or what it may be. Is my last shipmate to die so dreadful? I don't feel well myself——"

The writing broke off, and when it was resumed the formation of the letters was even more bungling than before.

"It's come, just as I feared 'twould. The mate has got it, but a good deal like the way Peter Gorrance was took, so he may be a long while dying, just as Peter was. But I can't hope but that the mate has got it, so he will go. Think of it! A whole ship's crew wiped out by that horrible poison, and as good lads as ever I seen in my life.

"The mate, he looked at me an hour ago and said, half-delirious, 'Man, man, I wish I had the muscle you have got!' He touched bedrock then, for I've been a mighty strong man, but I don't feel as powerful today as usual. Holding the wheel seems hard work, but that's mebbe the long stretch I've had at it, and lack of sleep. Anyhow, I feel a bit lacking in muscle. That's the way Aleck and Ben was beset when the poison took them down, but of course I ain't got that deadly trouble. As the mate said to me, 'Gideon, you've got so vast a lot of life and endurance that you will fight the disease off.' Of course he was right. Still, I'd like to have somebody to spell me with a trick at the wheel now and then, for I feel kinder weary like—I hear the mate calling!"

The lines that followed were shaky.

"Two hours have passed sence I writ what's above. Things are bad in this ship. The mate has become unconscious and I can't rouse him up. I've got lashings so I can make the wheel fast or hold it, as I like, and I leave it alone a good deal, me setting hard by it. Fact is, I got a fall down the companion as I was going to see the mate, and it's upset my muscular powers. I wonder why I fell down? If I was a weak man like Abram and Tuttle, I should say I had a mild fit, such as they had when they was took with this poison malady, but I'm too strong for such weaknesses as them. Guess I slipped down the companion, tho I don't know how I did it.

"I feel a prodigious thirst onto me that is odd. Have to drink at the scuttle-butt every ten minutes. When Abram was sick I told him he soaked up water like a sponge, he drank so much. I drink now just as he then, but my thirst is natural, of course. I must have eaten something salty, I suppose."

Another break, another change for the worse in the writing, and the story was renewed.

"Horror has took passage in this ship. The mate lays like one dead, and—I've got that demon disease. No doubt on't! Got all the symptoms that Abram had. I see now that I did have a slight fit when I tumbled down the steps. Yes, and I know what my weakness and my great thirst mean. I've got it! Got the trouble that carried all my mates off, and that will carry the mate, too. I've got that poison a-holt of me!

"I'm glad I've been writing out a history of the case, and I'll leave it when I die. I'm going to pin it to the cabin table with a knife. Somebody will find it. Queer that we never sight another ship. I've worried some because our flag of distress blowed away in that squall, but what does it matter, sence we've seen no vessel? Why didn't the captain shift our helm and run for the nighest port when he seen what trouble we had? Shall we never sight no ship?"

What followed was almost unreadable.

"I'm in a right bad way. My muscle is about gone, and I suffer bad. Spend most o' my time drinkin' at the scuttle-butt. I can't no longer get below to see the mate, for I'm that weak I couldn't get back on deck again. My duty is to manage the wheel, and I'll do it. I find I can't lash it and leave her for long, the ship being so big, makin' so much pull. Between the half-lashings and myself the wheel has to keep a bit steady, and I trust I does my duty. An hour ago I looked up at the rigging, and there I seen every man o' my dead shipmates setting on the yards, a-smoking cheerful-like. I called to them, and Abram answers back friendly, 'We are waitin' for you, Gideon, man!' Dead men must be amiable chaps.

"I shall be took off this hooker soon. Over a hundred ships are now in sight, all bound this way, and each an' every lookout is a hollering: 'What ho, Gideon, don't you worry, for we will see you safe out on't!' Still, I wish the sea didn't have them gravestones scattered all along on the top of the waves. I wonder how they got a copy of what was carved on my grandfather's tombstone? It is queer to see all them stones shifted from the home burying-ground to this sea—I hope I ain't going to have another fit!"

The writing ended with a deep, heavy, purposeless mark that was almost a gash in the paper. Mate Harding looked up and met the gaze of the sailor who had brought the paper.

"I couldn't help readin' it, sir," said the man. "An awful dockymunt, ain't it? Smitten with the disease that killed his mates, that Gideon was clean out o' his mind when he wrote the last of his account. Gravestones set in the surface of the sea! Whew! His poor brain was gone afore his body. Do you know what that epidemic disease was, sir?"

"No," Harding replied.

"Neither do I, and neither did Gideon, you'll have seen."

"He had much to say about poison. Quite likely it was some sort of disease-infected food that set the plague afoot. Probably we should know more about it but for the fact that part of the account is missing. It begins so abruptly that it is certain a page is lacking. The decapitated portion that we have fails to give us the name of the captain, and, worse yet, the name of the mate. As he is the only man left alive we may well wish we knew who he is. Pity part of it was lost."

"I picked up all the bits by the scuttle-butt, sir. I reckon that after Gideon's head went back on him he was so flighty that he did not protect his letter. Part on't was dropped, and was later wet completely as he drinked, and then accidentally got ground under his feet unknown to him. If the bits can be pieced together and read——"

"We'll talk about that later. Finish up here, men. Get away before the ship goes down!"

CHAPTER XIII.

HARDING took an energetic step toward the companionway and then stopped short.

"The ship's papers!" he exclaimed. "We must get them and save them from loss. I have been so wrapped up in human beings that I've forgotten everything else. The papers——"

"Hickby has got them already," interrupted a sailor. "He knew they would be wanted, so he took pains to make sure of them. He's on deck now, waiting for us."

"Then we'll not keep him waiting. Have we secured everything valuable, Loglee?"

"All that we can carry in the boat, sir, and this ship rides a risky keel. I think you are right when you advise getting clear of her."

"We'll go. We want to be somewhere else when she takes her last plunge."

With a final look at the cabin he was about to leave when one of his men spoke earnestly.

"Mr. Harding, sir, what's to be done with the mortal remains of that poor Gideon who stuck to his duty as long as a breath remained in his body? I say, lash him to the wheel he held while life slipped him by, faithful to the end, and let him go down so."

"An excellent idea, but I think of another. Yonder is the stateroom that was undoubtedly that of the ship's captain. Why not let loyal-hearted Gideon have the best that's in the ship as he goes to his grave? Suppose we give him the captain's room for his burial casket?"

The idea was received with approval, and the dead wheelsman was brought down and arranged to the satisfaction of his mates. Lashed to the captain's berth, he awaited the final moment.

No time was lost after that, and Harding hurried his men to the deck. A great disappointment awaited them there. Hickby stood by the rail, dripping with water.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Harding," he said, "but I've lost the ship's log and other papers. I tried to slide down the rope to get into the boat, but lost my hold and tumbled into the sea. All I had in my hands got away from me, and tho I've hunted the surface of the water most careful, I can't find so much as a scrap of paper. Everything sunk."

The mate scowled upon his man darkly.

"Are you a sailor or a cow?" he snapped.

"Maybe not much of either," said Hickby, contritely. "I'm masterful sorry it happened so, sir."

"You'll be lucky if the captain of the Sea Laugh doesn't trice you up to the mast and give you a couple dozen. I'll leave you to settle it with him, but the loss of those papers—well!"

Harding broke off angrily. With the log-book and other things gone it might not be easy to get the history of the Herman Hammond, smitten ship of mystery.

There was no more to do, and in a few minutes the last man was in the boat. The Hammond's mate lay motionless, his eyes still closed, and he received no further attention then. They pushed clear and pulled a few fathoms away from the doomed ship

"She hangs to like a hungry shark," remarked Shaw, "and I don't see why. She got a wound from us that let the water into her amazing, and she's a floating pond below decks now. Still, her cargo was nearly all wood, so it would help to keep her afloat."

"Do we stand by to see the last of her, sir?" asked another sailor.

"No. We have been too long already, and must pick up our own ship. Also, the quicker we get this unconscious man near help, the better. I take it our ship lies that way, and as long as the fog is lifting fast we ought soon to find her. Oars, men! Pull!"

The start was made, and the Sea Laugh was sighted ten minutes later. By the time they lay alongside her channels the day was nearly clear, and when they had gained their own deck the sea lay fairly bright off their hull. Looking back, the

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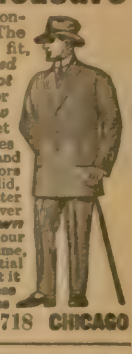

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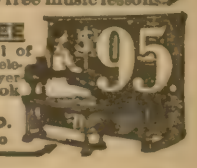

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mate saw the Herman Hammond still afloat, but so low in the water that her end was a matter of short time.

The mere fact that an unconscious man was picked up at sea was nothing in the annals of the deep, and the unknown was carried below without delay. The mystery surrounding him could be taken up later.

By that time it was positively known that the Sea Laugh had not received a troublesome hurt in the collision. She had a long wound along her bow, but the water that gained entrance was a mere trickle that had long since been checked.

Captain Roxford heard the mate's report, an hour later, with thoughtful attention.

"An odd case, Mr. Harding," he said slowly.

"Yes, sir."

"Tainted food is a bad poison, and possibly that was what carried off the crew of the Hammond. We will proceed on that theory, at first, and try to save your rescued man. No clew to his name?"

"Not a bit, sir."

"Pass that by for now. Feeling all right?"

"Certainly. Why not, sir?"

"You are wanted."

"Wanted? What do you mean?"

"Mrs. Loren F. Harding wants a word with her husband."

The captain smiled as he said it, hardly with agreeable amusement, and Harding was decidedly without mirth as he listened.

"Has that confounded woman broke loose again?" he exclaimed.

"All of that. She wants her husband, she says."

"Did you encourage her?" the mate asked tartly.

"I never interfere when husband and wife get to fighting. In such a case the situation of a bystander is painfully dangerous. No, I did not encourage nor discourage her. You will have to do that, meaning one of the two. Frankly, I'm not in great sympathy with her. If she tells the truth you belong to her, but I'm blessed if I want her to bring her war-party into my ship."

"Couldn't you silence her?"

"Maybe, but what I want is this. See her, Harding, and have it out with her. When she sets eyes on you she will know whether you are her husband or not. Settle it, right away."

"Agreed!"

"She is in improved health today, and is now in the cabin. Will you see her there at once? I'll marshal all my own women on deck, so they will not act the listeners or spies in general, which will give you a private hour to yourself."

"Five minutes will be enough."

"Wait until you hear what Mrs. Loren F. Harding says before you feel sure of that. Ready?"

"Ready."

"I'll start the circus."

The captain took a step away, hesitated, turned back and added:

"I suppose I should do this with some delicacy. Go well aft, stay there until I bring my private collection of women on deck, and then slip quietly down. You will find your reputed wife there."

Roxford disappeared and the mate gained the indicated position. He no longer worried over the woman from the sea. He was not her husband, and she had only to see him to realize that fact. The only danger was that she might believe there was only one Harding.

Shortly after he saw the Roxford women appear, but none of their number came near him, and when he received a secret signal from the captain he hurried down the companionway.

A woman waited his coming in the cabin.

More than ever convinced that the difficulty could be easily bridged, he smiled and looked at her complacently, almost prepared to enjoy her consternation when she saw how mistaken she was, but events did not go as he expected.

She came to her feet with a bound that was the result of youth and abundant health, and her handsome face was aglow with delight. Reaching her hands forward she ran to meet him.

"Loren!" she exclaimed. "Oh, my dear husband!"

His smile faded, his face fell, and dismay was in his manner.

Her rush was taking her to his side, but he evaded her by quick action and deftly placed the end of the table between them.

"My good woman!" he cried, "there's a mistake!"

She stopped short, her face hardening. The delight of the meeting was gone, and she regarded him in growing hostility.

(Continued Next Week.)

Classified Want Ads

Classified Want Ad Information

If you have hesitated to try Classified Advertising for fear your lack of experience in writing advertisements might stand in your way you need delay no longer. Just write a letter to the Classified Dept., W. D. Boyce Co., 500 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. State fully what you wish to advertise and the amount of money you can devote to it. Copy will at once be submitted for your approval. Rate 30c a word. Not less than 14 words accepted.

W. D. BOYCE COMPANY - - - - Publisher

SALESMEN WANTED

A WHIRLWIND SELLER—JOHNSON MADE $12 first hour; Brant $17 less than an hour; Winston cleared $138 in two days; our fuel vaporizer, quickly attached to all autos, saves 25 to 50 per cent of gasoline, gives 25 to 50 per cent more mileage, 20 to 40 per cent more power, 10 to 40 per cent more speed, eliminates carbon, prevents engine heating; retail price $2; sold under money-back guarantee; every auto owner will buy when shown these facts; easily demonstrated; territory going fast; get busy; live wires make $300 to $500 monthly; are you one? Write at once. K. F. Weaver, Box 330, Topeka, Kansas.

AGENTS WANTED

AGENTS. WE NEED MEN AND WOMEN right now to take orders for world's greatest raincoat values. Dandy coat $3.98. Sixty-five fabrics. Dozens of styles. Made to measure and delivered direct from our big factory to your customer. No delivering. Profit in advance. Easy to sell. Cooper making $300 monthly. Glover $61.50 first four days. Neally 22 orders in 2 days. Four average orders a day gives you $2,500 a year profit. Full outfit and sample coat given. Write for wonderful offer. Comer Mfg. Co., Dept. B-15, Dayton, Ohio.

EVERY HOME ON FARM, IN SMALL town or suburb needs and will buy the wonderful Aladdin kerosene (coal-oil) mantle lamp. Five times as bright as electric. Tested and recommended by Government and 34 leading universities. Awarded gold medal. One farmer cleared over $500 in six weeks. Hundreds with rigs or autos earning $100 to $300 per month. No capital required. We furnish goods on time to reliable men. Write quick for distributor's proposition and lamp for free trial. Mantle Lamp Co., 506 Aladdin Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

DO YOU WANT TO TRAVEL AT OUR EX- pense? We want good men and women for traveling general agents. Must have fair education and good references. Will make contract for three months, six months or year at salary $22.50 per week and necessary expenses. Can assign most any territory desired. For full particulars address George G. Clokey Company, Philadelphia, Pa., Dept. 4-A.

$25 DAILY EASY, INTRODUCING GREAT- est household money saver just invented. Reduces high living cost. Saves its own first cost first 10 minutes. Sells itself in every house. Retails $2.00. Your commission $1.10. Samples free. Ovee Mfg. Co., 7 Ovee Bldg., Louisville, Ky.

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1917'S GREATEST SENSATION, 11 PIECE toilet goods combination selling like blazes at $1.00 with $1.00 carving set free. Everybody buys. Engle's profit first week $51.00. Great crew proposition. M. Pierce Co., 906 Lake, Chicago.

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AGENTS—200% PROFIT. WONDERFUL little article. Something new; sells like wildfire. Carry right in pocket. Write at once for free sample. E. M. Feltman, Mgr., 3254 3rd St., Cincinnati, Ohio.

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AGENTS—$30 A WEEK AND EXPENSES selling window gold sign letters. Anyone can put on. Free samples. Liberal offer to general agents. Metallic Letter Co., 416 N. Clark, Chicago.

AGENTS WORKING THE COUNTRY WANT- ing the best portraits for the least money should send for our catalog. Address Friedman & Co., Box 120, Martinsburg, Mo.

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SOMETHING NEW IN PORTRAITS AND frames. Agents wanted; special inducements to new customers, write for catalogue. Southern Art Co., Oak Park, Ill.

WE START YOU WITHOUT A DOLLAR— Soaps, extracts, perfumes, toilet goods. Experience unnecessary. Carnation Co., 26 S. Main, St. Louis.

AGENTS WANTED—(Continued)

WE START YOU IN BUSINESS, FURNISH- ing everything; men and women, $30.00 to $200.00 weekly operating our "New System Specialty Candy Factories," home anywhere. Opportunity lifetime; booklet free. Z. Ragsdale Co., East Orange, N. J.

AGENTS — I'VE A NEW SOAP GAME that's a dandy. New stuff; 100% profits. Sample and full layout free. Write quick. Lacassian Co., Dept. 21, St. Louis, Mo.

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REMNANT STORE, CINCINNATI, OHIO. Greatest dry goods bargains on earth. Agents and store keepers supplied.

HELP WANTED

WANTED IMMEDIATELY — THOUSANDS men—women, 18 or over, for U. S. Government jobs. War means many vacancies. $100 month. Steady work. Life appointment. Write for list positions. Franklin Institute, Dept. G 30, Rochester, N. Y.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, are offered here.

WANTED—MEN TO BECOME CHAUF- feurs. $25.00 week. Earn while learning. Franklin Institute, Dept. G 809, Rochester, N. Y.

EARN $15 TO $20 A WEEK RE-PLATING silverware. Send 25c for formula. E. W. Kugel, Jr., Benedict, Neb.

$12.50 PER 100 COLLECTING NAMES AND addresses. Send stamp. National Directory Works, Little Falls, Minnesota.

MALE HELP WANTED

GOVERNMENT EXAMINATIONS — THOR- ough instruction, $5. Returned if not appointed. Particulars free. American Civil Service School, Washington, D. C.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN, 8 hours, $140. Colored porters wanted everywhere. Experience unnecessary. 686 Ry. Bureau, East St. Louis, Ills.

NATIONAL DETECTIVE AGENCY WANTS young man in each county to learn and do detective work. Write P. O. Box 867, Pittsburgh, Pa.

$20.00 WEEKLY MADE WRITING NAMES for mail order houses. No canvassing. Particulars free. The Guide Company, Memphis, Tennessee.

$100 MONTH PAID MEN—WOMEN. Government jobs. Write for list positions. Franklin Institute, Dept. G 28, Rochester, N. Y.

BE A DETECTIVE. EXCELLENT OPPOR- tunity, good pay, travel. Write C. T. Ludwig, 320 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

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WOMEN TO SEW. GOODS SENT PRE- paid to your door; plain sewing; steady work; no canvassing. Send stamped envelope for prices paid. Universal Co., Dept. 54, Philadelphia, Pa.

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WRITE PHOTOPLAYS! $100 EACH. Obtain free booklet "How to Write Photoplays." Universal Publishing Co., D 600, Fergus Falls, Minn.

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MAKE BIG MONEY. START A BUSINESS of your own. We give full instruction to succeed. Guaranteed formulas how to manufacture: Silverplating powder, liquid court-plaster. Strawhat bleach. Resilvering mirrors. Dressing and polish for tan shoes. Luminous paint. Toothpaste for collapsible tubes. Soap-bubble liquid. All for 50c. Sidney Specialty Co., 233 N. Fulton Street, New York City.

DON'T INVEST UNTIL YOU HAVE IN- vestigated the stock of the Alamo Automobile Corporation, stock now selling at $1.00 a share, will be worth $5.00 in a short time, buy now and get an equal amount of high class stock free. For information address. The Fidelity Investment Co., No. 6 East Jackson Ave., Iola, Kans.

$1 MAY START YOU TO FORTUNE. GET your share of millions being paid in oil dividends. An interest in our cooperative well may earn you $100 monthly. Full information, complete maps free. Write today. General offices, Sourlake Texas Oil Co., 2823 Ann, St. Louis, Mo.

CHANCE TO MAKE MONEY IN OUR LEAD & Zinc mine in Va. New Jersey Zinc Co. making millions. Their stock $347. Ours 25 cts a share. One of their mines on adjoining farm. Write, Helen Mineral Co., 7014 Jenkins Arcade, Pittsburgh, Pa.

$20 BUYS DEED TO LAND, ALSO INTER- est in oil well that should pay you $700 for every dollar invested; payments $2 monthly. Complete information free. Address Texas-Gulf Company, 1105 Union Bank, Houston, Texas.

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INVENT SOMETHING. YOUR IDEAS MAY bring wealth. Free book tells what to invent and how to obtain a patent through our credit system. Talbert & Parker, 4276 Talbert Bldg., Washington, D. C.

PROTECTIVE PATENTS PROCURED promptly, 104 pg. Blue Book free. Trademarks registered. Robb & Robb, 248-252 Southern Building, Washington, D. C.

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS

$35.00 PROFIT NIGHTLY. SMALL CAPITAL starts you. Outfits sold on installments. No experience needed. Our machines are used and endorsed by Government institutions. Catalog free. Atlas Moving Picture Co., Franklin Bldg., Chicago.

$100 TO $200 PROFIT WEEKLY. COM- plete moving picture outfit. Machine, films, etc., furnished on easy payment plan. No experience needed. Free book explains everything. Monarch Film Service, Dept. 1-A, 228 Union Ave., Memphis, Tenn.

FLORIDA LANDS

FLORIDA—GET SPECIAL OFFER ON splendid farm land near Jax. Jacksonville Heights Imp. Co., Jacksonville, Fla.

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FARMING IS PLEASANT AND PROFIT- able in Va. and N. C. Good land $15 acre up, easy payments. Climate, schools, churches, roads and neighbors that make life worth living. Close to markets—fruit, dairy and stock farms pay big here. Farm lists, magazine and interesting literature free. Address F. H. LaBaume, Agrl. Agt., N. & W. Ry., 248 N. & W. Bldg., Roanoke, Va.

PERSONAL

SUFFERERS FROM NERVOUS, WEAK, run down conditions should take Juven Pills. They accomplish marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever before been offered. Sent postpaid only on receipt of this advertisement and $1, by C. I. Hood Co., proprietors Hood's Sarsaparilla, Lowell, Mass. (Z.R.)

MEN:—SEXTONIQUE NEVER FAILS TO restore strength to those troubled with nervous, weak, run-down and despondent conditions that undermine good health. Costs nothing if not cured. Write for free book. Cumberland Chemical Co., Box 175, B-W, Nashville, Tenn.

MEN ON THE DOWN GRADE, REMEMBER we cure varicocele, stricture, chronic, nervous, blood, kidney, bladder and private diseases. Book symptom blank and advice free, sealed. Hinze Medical Institute, 22 Washington Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minn.

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MARRY — FREE PHOTOS, BEAUTIFUL ladies; descriptions and directory; pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 21, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH photos and description free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 28, Kansas City, Mo.

BIG MARRIAGE PAPER WITH NAMES, addresses, descriptions and photos, 25c; no rich widow fakes. Wren, 46 Grand Rapids, Mich.

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FOR SPEEDY MARRIAGE, BEST, LARGEST in country. Established 11 years, many wealthy, confidential descriptions free. Reliable Club, Mrs. Wrubel, Oakland, Calif.

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MARRIAGE PAPER. NEW RELIABLE plan with descriptions free. Social Club, Dept. 17, Gladwin, Mich.

GET MARRIED — BEST MATRIMONIAL paper published. Free for stamp. Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio.

SECRETS, MAGIC, MYSTERY, MIND READ- ing. Send only 20c for this $1 book. Send now. D. Union Book Co., Palatine, Ill.

MARRY RICH. HUNDREDS ANXIOUS TO marry. Descriptions and photos free. E. Unity, Grand Rapids, Mich.

"FROM THE BALL ROOM TO HELL" mailed anywhere, 25c. L. E. Muncy, 136 E. Pleasant Ave., A. Syracuse, N. Y.

DARE YOU ANSWER THIS—LONELY farmer, worth $95,000, will marry. Honorable, 57 4th street, San Francisco.

WIDOW, 37, WORTH $90,000, LONESOME, would marry, address, Mrs. W., Box 241, San Francisco, Cal.

REAL PHOTOS. ARTISTS MODELS; BATH- ing girls. Fascinating poses. Sample 10c. Simpson Co., Wheeling, W. Va.

WANT TO MARRY RICH? IF SO, WRITE to C. A. Rowell, Box 169, Chicago, Ill.

Chicago Ledger

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READERS WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Kindness breaks no bones.

Realization without hope loses half its charm.

A good memory test is to remember the poor.

Dry sermons are most endurable on wet Sabbaths.

Ice cream melts more feminine hearts than hot words do.

Reform is an airship that is always on the verge of starting.

Don't think because the mule takes to his heels that he is a coward.

Kissing as a theory is far less satisfying than a practical example.

Don't talk too much; a stiff lower jaw is as useful as a stiff upper lip.

Minding one's own business is a good method of developing the brain.

In the average man's life the longest day is the one just before pay day.

Baking powder causes bread to raise, but gunpowder will raise it quicker.

When the wife wants pin money her husband has to come up to the scratch.

Clothes do not make the man, yet a man may owe a great deal to his tailor.

If a word to the wise is sufficient, lawyers must consider jurors blooming idiots.

A pessimist likes a thing he can't enjoy and an optimist enjoys a thing he can't like.

When you lose a friend by lending him a small sum of money you get the best of the bargain.

The man who loves a woman as much as she wants to be loved has no time for outside flirtations.

Widows frequently lead bachelors to the marriage altar; they have been there before and know the way.

Men who have seen better days as a rule looked at them too often thru the bottoms of whisky glasses.

Wives are more liberal than husbands. The wife who has a mind of her own is apt to give her husband a piece of it.

Some young men would get along better if they had less point to their shoes and a little more in their conversation.

Before marriage a man's display of affection is apt to be overdone; after marriage it is more likely to be rare.

The ancients believed the world was square—but that was long before political investigation committees were invented.

Age rarely brings us wisdom; about the best it can do is to teach us which particular brand of folly is least harmful to us.

War and Women

THE GIRL IN WHITE.

Soldier in camps of the war tonight,
Keep in your vision the Girl in White!

They say you are strong for the scarlet woman,
The careless woman, the vampire type,
Who may be base, tho her heart is human,
And her lips are red, and sweet and ripe.
It may be so, but I trust you are dreaming
In lonely tents, on the posts you keep,
Of a better girl than the one whose gleaming
Is an evil thing when you want to sleep.

Soldier in camps of the war tonight,
Keep in your vision the Girl in White!

They give you a name for a love uncertain,
For a wayward will with the scarlet crew,
On whose wild ways they would draw the curtain
But I have a better thought for you.
There in your tents of trial and training,
I guess you are seeking as all men should
A face in its pure, sweet glory reigning
O'er your fortunes ever, for bad or good.

Soldier in camps of the war tonight,
Keep in your vision the Girl in White!

Two Girls of France.

The day was unusually warm, and the few old men and boys who were helping with the harvest on the Beaujouan farm, near Villemer, in France, were lying in the shade of the great trees bordering the road. They were asleep, but not so two other workers, the young girls Raymonde and Jeanne Beaujouan, aged 12 and 14, says the St. Nicholas, in a recent number.

While Jeanne shooed off the drowsy flies, Raymonde sat up straight, glancing at the sky and then at the horses, for on her rested the responsibilities of the harvest. She was taller than her 14-year-old sister, and besides she bore the name of her father, Raymond Beaujouan, who several weeks before, on the first day of the French mobilization for the great war, had gone off to fight for his country.

Before leaving, the father said to his wife: "You won't be able to get enough men and boys to do all the work, but you will have to do the best you can. If only Raymonde and Jeanne were boys, they could help harvest the oats and wheat."

Madame Beaujouan replied, "Raymonde can work almost as well as a boy;" and Raymonde, feeling a little hurt, had said, "I can do just as much as any boy."

And here she was this hot harvest day working, not like a boy, but like a man. It was she who in the morning had harnessed the two horses that stood, dripping with sweat, under one of the trees. It was she who said to one of the men: "It is too bad that horses can't complain before they are ready to drop from working too much in the sun. I don't want to work Coquette and Poulot until they fall down, but we must finish this field, for it may rain. Tell the men that it's time to start."

When all was ready Raymonde took her place on the iron seat of the reaper and drove off with a "Giddap, Coquette! Get along, Poulot!"

The swath made by the reaper was clean and straight. Behind, with a determined step, walked Jeanne, her long braid, tied with a red ribbon, bobbing about under her straw hat. She watched the horses, the falling grain, the whirring knives of the reaper, ready to warn her sister if anything went wrong. Coming from the farmhouse to bring her children a drink of fresh water, the mother said: "If I had to use this big machine, I shouldn't know what to do."

"A man couldn't drive the reaper any better than Raymonde," said one of the old workers. "If her father could see her he would be very proud."

In the middle of the afternoon Raymonde called a halt in the work. "The horses need a rest," she said. While the men lay in the shade of the trees, Coquette and Poulot cropped grass, and Raymonde and Jeanne sat under a linden-tree. But soon Raymonde was again seated on the reaper, and Jeanne was trudging along behind.

Because of these two little girls, whose combined ages were then only 26 years, the first harvest after the great war began was a success on the Beaujouan farm. Even when the grain was safely stored away, Raymonde's and Jeanne's work did not come to an end. They kept themselves busy from early morning until late at night with the duties of the farm.

When spring came they got ready for the next harvest, for they could do even harder work than drive a reaper. They hitched the horses to the other machines to plow, harrow and sow, not only their father's land, but also their Uncle Nestor's. The old peasants around Villemer say that there are many men who cannot do better than these two girls, and their father has written home from the front that he made a mistake in wishing that Raymonde and Jeanne were boys.

So for three years the two little daughters of France have done the work of men, helping to produce the food that their nation must have in order to drive the enemy out of their country.

ENGLISH GIRL GUIDES.

The Girl Guides of England, who are the sisters of the Girl Scouts of the United States, have brought a new distinction to the world-wide sisterhood of the Girl Scouts in the graceful service they have rendered General Pershing.

A letter from Gen. Sir Robert Baden-Powell, not long since, to Mrs. Juliette Low, national president of the Girl Scouts, tells of a new war service performed by these useful young women. Two of them, Miss Ivy Rudd of the Fourth Westminster Company, and Miss Alice Gardner of the First Wimbledon Company, served as orderlies to General Pershing during his stay in London. The fact that this service was rendered at the request of the English war office adds to the inspiration and impressiveness of the action.

America will soon come to realize, as England has already done, that these girls are of real value to the country in any emergency. Many prominent educators and educational institutions have already recognized the value of scout training in building character and developing resourcefulness among girls. When the plans now being perfected are put into operation, for the Girl Scouts to work directly under the guidance of the National Council for Defense, the achievements of these girls in war work will be brought to the attention of the public. The organization is adding 2,000 or more members to its list of registered Scouts each month, and it seems destined to enroll, under its standard of industry, usefulness and loyalty, the girlhood of America.

SLOGANS.

Keep the home fires burning, mother;
Waste list not among our sins;
Save a bit for soldier brother,
Boil potatoes in their skins!
Father dig, and no growls utter,
Dig and smile for all our sakes;
When you've sirup don't waste butter,
Do not lubricate your cakes.

For the flag young Sam is flying,
In the trench George does his bit.
For the Red Cross Susie's trying,
Leaving grandma home to knit.
Here's the task, now let's go to it!
There's the foe—for freedom strike!
Every duty let us do it—
Grin, too, for the love o' Mike!

8-Piece Outfit—

$1.00

Astounding? Yes, for here is a better quality at lower prices than others sell for cash. Don't miss it. We ship on approval. Money back if you say so. Outfit includes:

1 West Point Norfolk Suit
1 Pair Best-Ever Black Shoes
1 Snappy Pinch Back Golf Cap
1 Snappy Striped Percale Waist
1 Pretty Silk Poplin Tie
3 Pairs of Fast Black Stockings

"West Point" pinch back Norfolk Suit, made in latest, snappiest style. Built for wear and has all the up-to-date details that the American boy delights in. Three outside fancy patch pockets and one inside pocket. Back has newest pinch effect with yoke shoulder and inverted plait down center. Three piece detachable belt. Lined with good twilled serge. Semi-peg knickers with belt loops and watch pocket. Comes in sizes 7 to 17. Made from smooth finish cashmeres in neat patterns of fancy blue, brown or gray.

Best-Ever Shoe, made from good black leather. Comfort last, strongly sewed. Sizes up to 6.

Snappy pinch back Golf Cap, made from selected patterns in fancy worsteds, same color as suit, sizes 6 1-4 to 7 1-8.

Washable waist made from fast color, fancy striped percale. Military link collar.

Four-in-hand Poplin Tie, rich assorted patterns.

Three pairs of stockings, Fast black, re-inforced knees.
Order by No. F.2. $1 down, $1.95 Monthly, Total price, $11.95.

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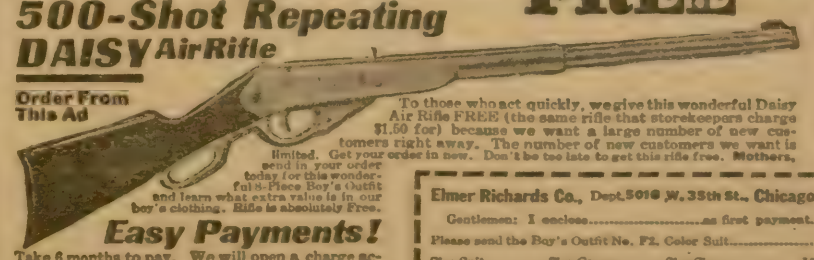

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Motion Picture Boys

Or, On a Camera Hunt

By Anthony J. Wayne

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CHAPTER IX.

A WONDERFUL PICTURE.

"I DO believe you're right, Wally!" Tom gave utterance to this assertion after he, too, had discovered something that moved projecting from that end window.

"It is a white rag, you see," Wally went on to say, "and as sure as you live I believe it's a child's hand that is waving the same."

"Well, this beats the record, Wally. Did you see the little thing look out then? From her long curly hair I'd say our discovery must be a girl. Think of the poor chink being in that cottage when it was borne along on the terrible waters. And what a wonderful miracle it was that threw the house up among the branches of this giant of a tree!"

Wally was waving his hand toward the child.

"Don't be frightened, sis," he called out, encouragingly, "we'll get you down out of that all right. Give us a little time, and we'll manage it easily enough."

Perhaps she understood what he said; at least his manner seemed to reassure her, for the frightened look on her pitiful face seemed partly to give way to a wan smile. She continued to wave her hand toward them, as tho entreating the two lads not to forsake her.

It was simply enough for Wally to make this promise, but possibly they would find it a trifle more difficult to carry it out.

"How will we get her down?" asked practical Tom.

"Oh! I'll manage that, never fear," his chum replied, throwing off his coat so as to be in better condition for climbing the big tree.

The lowest limb was a little beyond his reach, and as to "shinning" up such an immense trunk, that would be utterly out of the question. But then Wally was accustomed to meeting and conquering difficulties, and he quickly discovered a plank that somehow had become wedged in among some rocks close by, and which he judged would prove to be the very thing he needed.

So he proceeded to secure this necessary auxiliary, while Tom commenced to move back a little, as tho he meant to take advantage of the golden opportunity, and secure another picture. The story of the discovery of the waif of the flood and her strange rescue would be almost unbelieveable unless they could produce such substantial proof of its truth.

Having arranged the plank to suit him, Wally now started to ascend, while Tom turned the crank of his camera methodically. Of course, once the active lad had managed to gain a lodgment among the limbs of the trees, he had no difficulty in climbing further.

Fortunately the castaway cottage was so situated that he could easily reach a door. When Tom saw him vanish within he stopped work, and waited to continue later on when there would be something more stirring.

Several minutes elapsed. Tom was growing very impatient, for he knew that as the sun declined further in the west his time for taking decent pictures was growing shorter. What could be detaining Wally? It was strange that he chose to linger there to question the child, when he must know that Tom would be wild to complete his latest picture as the descent was effected.

Wally appeared at the window just as Tom had made up his mind to give vent to a summons; he waved his hand and called out to the one below:

"Coming down right away, Tom; and you'll be some surprised at what I've got to tell you. I'll try and keep on the side toward you, so the picture will turn out well. Get ready now to begin work."

Tom had hardly commenced turning the crank again when Wally was seen emerging from the door. He stopped to assist the small girl, and Tom noticed with more or less satisfaction that she seemed capable of taking care of herself to a considerable extent. Still, he could not blame the child for not having ventured to try and reach the ground by herself; the aspect of that washed-out territory around the tree was enough to make any one timid, Tom felt sure.

Wally had very little difficulty in effecting a masterly descent, and in helping the girl down, also; and Tom made sure to get every part of the procedure in his picture. It would make a mighty interesting scene, he felt certain. Then Tom began to notice what a pretty little thing the child was, with her bright eyes, abundant tresses and plump cheeks; tho the terrible experience thru which she had so recently passed seemed to have chased all the color from her face.

Wally was grinning, as he always did when he had something in the nature of a surprise up his sleeve.

"You couldn't guess in a coon's age, Tom, who this little missy is," he was saying now, "so I'll have to introduce you. It's Margie Saunders, the little sister we heard about from Alec!"

Of course Tom was correspondingly amazed. It was indeed very remarkable that by a freak of good fortune they should have been allowed to save both brother and sister from danger, perhaps even death.

"It's certainly wonderful," he admitted, "and I'm glad we happened along in time to be of service to Alec's sister. Besides, it's given me a great picture."

"But hold on, Tom, you haven't heard everything yet," Wally told him.

"What else can there be?" demanded the other, arching his eyebrows as he spoke.

"You forgot that Alec told us he had a father also, Tom?"

"What, is he up there, too?" cried Tom, at the same time doubtless wondering how it came the man had not appeared in view, or attempted to take the child from the tree house after the flood had declined enough to make such a thing possible.

"Yes, and almost helpless," Wally told him. "He had the misfortune to sprain his ankle, from being thrown about while the cottage was dashing along on the flood. I told him we would see that he got out of his predicament, Tom."

"To be sure we will," hastily agreed the other, tho at the same time he could not help wondering just how the feat of getting the injured man down from the tree was to be effected; but then evidently Wally had been figuring this all out, and Wally was a good hand at such problems.

"I've got the rope still, you remember, which we found so handy with Alec," the climber explained, "and by arranging it so that Mr. Saunders can make use of both his hands, he'll be able to slide down all right."

Then get busy right away, please, Wally; for I wouldn't want to miss that little rescue act for anything."

"Watch my smoke, Tom."

So Wally again commenced to ascend to the tree house, and soon vanished within the open door. He was gone but a brief time when once more he appeared in view. A second figure also hove in sight, which proved that Mr. Saunders was at least able to get around to some extent, despite the intense pain he must be suffering from his sprained ankle.

Wally knew just how to manage. He hovered immediately below, and rendered every possible assistance while the man was coming down. The rope proved a great aid, and before long both were on the ground, where the man sank down, compelled to shut his teeth tightly together on account of the anguish which he suffered, consequent on any exertion.

"Eureka! got it all in!" exclaimed the overjoyed photographer, and then he hastened to shake hands with Alec's father, to whom doubtless Wally had already explained how they had been able to assist the boy in his time of great need.

A new puzzle now confronted them. How were they going to get the injured man up the side of the steep ridge to where they could make a camp? Tom again relied on his chum to suggest a plan, nor did he look in vain.

"Here's what we've figured on doing, Tom," explained the other, with his accustomed promptness. "Mr. Saunders says he will be able, with some help from us, to hobble along, and make out to climb the slope, with a number of rests. Once we manage to reach the road and, don't you see, I could go back and get out our team? Then we can take him along to where he has some relatives living, far out of reach of the flood. And if I'm smart all this could be carried out by sundown."

"The sooner we make a start the better," said Mr. Saunders. "I know it's going to be painful, but I've made up my mind to stand anything so as to get the child under a sheltering roof tonight. The poor little thing has been trying to do all she could to help me. She even found some food in the mess the cabin is in; and also bathed my swollen ankle with witch hazel. I'm ready to start as soon as you give the word."

So Wally found a stick that would serve as a cane, and also helped all he could while they commenced the tiresome journey. There are few things more painful than a severe sprain, and many times Mr. Saunders was heard to groan as he received some unavoidable wrench, but he stuck it out valiantly, and while progress was more or less slow, by degrees they mounted the hillside.

Wally kept on encouraging the others. His sunny nature was just made for such an occasion, and wonderfully effective. His declarations that the road could not be far distant, while founded on a mere guess, aided the injured man to hold out. And in due time they did find themselves at their journey's end, with the road lying before them.

"The worst is over, now, sir," Wally told Mr. Saunders. "Sit down here on this bed of moss. I think it would relieve you a lot if Margie bathed your ankle again from the bottle of witch hazel we fetched along. And while you're doing that I'll take a spin up the road so as to get the team. It's hardly more than a mile to the dam, where we left our rig. I ought to be back in half an hour or so, and there's three times that before evening sets in."

"How about me going?" asked Tom, immediately.

"You stay where you are and look after things," Wally told him, with a show of authority. "Besides, I'm the better runner of the two, and I want a little more exercise to get the stiffness out of my joints. So long, Tom! Look for me when I come."

With that he was off on a jog trot that promised to carry him over the ground at a pretty fair rate. Tom settled down to await the return of his comrade. He was secretly pleased with the arrangement, because it would give them a chance to enjoy the luxury of their blankets when the time for sleeping arrived; and more than this they would also have their stock of food, so that a fire could be started and a regular supper prepared, such as he dearly loved.

The clever little girl was busying herself with attending to her father's injured foot. She seemed very smart as a nurse, and Tom, thinking of his three small sisters at home, took considerable interest in her actions. Mr. Saunders bore his sufferings with fortitude. He assured Tom he would never forget his kindness of himself and companion, tho he could never repay them, except in sincere thanks. He asked many questions, and in this way learned just about what had taken place at the time the retaining wall gave way and released the impounded waters of the great reservoir.

"I've lost my little home, and I suppose there's nothing left of the ground I've cultivated for years," he went on to say, tho not dejectedly, Tom noticed; "but since all of us have had our lives spared, I mustn't complain. I have a chance to buy a place over the ridge, and this will cause me to close the bargain. We can start in again fresh, for luckily I have some means. There will be many others who may not come out half so well. I'm sorry for my neighbors, and only hope none of them have been lost."

Tom was pleased to hear this. He had wondered what sort of a future lay before the Saunders, under the belief that their all had been lost.

The time passed slowly. All of them began to cast anxious looks up along the ridge road, as tho anticipating the coming of Wally and the team. The sun was heading toward the western horizon, tho still an hour from setting; and Tom believed they would have ample time to carry out all their plans.

Then the little girl jumped up and clapped her hands joyously.

"I hear horses coming up there," she said aloud, and by that time Tom was able to catch the thumping of the hoofs on the stony road, as well as the grinding of wheels.

Presently the team appeared in sight around a bend, and there was Wally waving a hand joyously to them.

"He's got some one with him on the seat," Tom announced. "I guess Wally's giving him a lift along the road."

"It's one of the men from the reservoir," said Mr. Saunders. "I suppose he was wanting to go down the road for some purpose, and took advantage of the opportunity for a ride."

This turned out to be the case, and the sturdy fellow actually took Mr. Saunders up in his muscular arms to deposit him in the body of the wagon, where he could lie upon the blankets in apparent comfort.

There was nothing further to detain them, and after Margie had been placed beside her father, and Tom had climbed aboard, watching jealously over the precious camera, Wally started the team along the rough road.

Perhaps every jar was felt by the man with the sprained ankle, but he managed to bear the pain very well, knowing it could not be helped. As Wally had once suffered from just such an injury, he could sympathize with any one so afflicted.

"Why, I'd sooner have a broken leg than a bad sprain," he was telling Tom, as they sat together, with the second man on the outside. "It'd heal up sooner, too, and that's the end of it; while a sprain lasts sometimes for twelve months or more."

They had been told by Mr. Saunders that the home of his relative was not more than three miles away, and accordingly, after they had passed over about that distance, the boys began to keep their eyes on the lookout for the house. Several had been passed on the way, but none that answered to the brief description given of the one for which they were bound.

"That one ahead looks about right to me, Tom," Wally finally declared.

"I know it's the house we are aiming for," chuckled the other, "and if you want to understand why I'm so positive, just cast your eye on that chap standing by the gate, and looking up the road toward us!"

"Sure enough, it's our Alec!" exclaimed Tom, in a pleased tone.

CHAPTER X.

LADS WORTH WHILE.

UPON hearing Tom mention the name of her brother, Margie stood up, holding on to the seat, and wildly waved her little pocket handkerchief. They saw that Alec had suddenly become intensely interested in the approaching vehicle. He had seemed very dejected just before, but this was now rapidly disappearing. Shading his eyes with his hand, on account of the lowering sun that struck him full in

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the face, he looked long and earnestly toward them.

"I guess he's beginning to suspect!" laughed Wally, happily, as they saw the boy start on a run toward them, while Margie continued to wave and to cry in her shrill treble voice, that must have sounded like the sweetest of music in the ears of Alec, for he was now answering and looking wildly excited.

So when they met, Wally stopped the horses so as to allow the boy to clamber up into the tail end of the wagon, where he joyously greeted those he loved, and whom he feared he was fated never to see again alive.

Presently they drew up in front of the small cottage. Several of the folks came hurrying out to greet Mr. Saunders and Margie warmly, for they, too, had shared in the fears that beset Alec. The injured man was soon transferred to the interior of the small house, where his astonishing story of being cast away and lodged by the flood in the branches of a giant tree caused considerable interest.

Wally and Tom had, of course, also entered when the rest did. They were warmly thanked for their share in the rescue of the little family, but of course made out that it was a very small matter, in fact, hardly worth mentioning at all.

A warm invitation to stay overnight was given by the lady of the house, who of course was Alec's own aunt; but neither of the boys seemed willing to accept the offer. They could see that with this influx of guests it would cramp the family considerably, and could not think of adding to the number, when they had all the necessities for a comfortable camp along with them in the wagon, everything but the tent, in fact, and they would not miss that very much.

"It's kind of you to ask us, ma'am," Wally told the lady, "but you see we've been looking forward to having a regular outing for so long now, that it would seem almost like a crime for us to sleep under a roof. We've got a lot of stuff in our wagon for our meals, and are wild to sleep under the stars. So please excuse us this time."

Then she tried to get them to accept some things in the line of cooked food which she chanced to have on hand, but again met with objections.

"Crullers are mighty fine eating, for a fact," Wally told her, "and nobody could be fonder of the same than both of us; but you see, ma'am, we've made up our minds to cut out all that sort of thing while on this outing, and stick to regular camp diet. We might accept a bottle of milk if you can spare it, which would go well with our coffee, seeing you say you have a Jersey cow; but that's the extent of our acceptance."

So they made ready to start back along the road, for it seemed that Wally, having that delightful camp in mind, had kept his eyes on the alert, and in this way discovered what he believed would be an ideal spot to spend the night—a fact he had taken pains to point out to his chum before they were fully past; and it was toward this place they now meant to head.

Both lads were brimful of satisfaction. They felt that they had been highly favored by fortune, not only because they had been allowed to secure some amazing pictures of the tragic event that would send a thrill all over the land when the facts were given in the papers the next morning, but circumstances had also allowed them to perform a praiseworthy act in helping some of the victims of the overwhelming flood.

Arriving at the camp site selected by Wally, they proceeded to make themselves quite at home. It was evident that they had made a good choice, for there was a gurgling stream of water that ran down the hillside, and a tree with widespreading branches under which they could arrange their blankets when it came time for retiring later on.

The road was close by, so that any one passing would surely see their fire. Wally was glad of this, because he hoped they might be able to give a needed supper to some one who had lost all in the terrible disaster, for both of the lads were in the fullest sympathy with those in distress.

It did not take long to get a fire started. Tom attended to this task, while Wally busied himself looking after the horses, giving them some oats for supper, and first of all letting them drink their fill from the brook near by.

"I can later on use the rope to stake out one of the horses," he called out to his chum, "and let him feast on this rich grass. The other will stay near by, I feel sure, so that we'll find him in the morning. We'll have to make arrangements to leave the outfit with Alec's folks, while we're down below with our camera, hunting up some more pictures worth while."

Having attended to all the necessary duties, the boys now thought of getting supper started. This is always a pleasant occupation in camp, and few there are who ever decline to help out. There seems to be a peculiar fascination about hovering over the fire and lending a hand to the cook. Perhaps it is because boys, as a rule, have so little chance at home to be in the kitchen that they enjoy it so much; or else the fact that their appetites increase so enormously as soon as they begin to sleep in the open, and live upon plain, substantial food.

"Well, that's what I call nice!" Tom heard his comrade remark, as he busied himself with the collection of "duffle" taken from the wagon.

"What tickles you so?" asked Tom, himself engaged with the frying pan in which he had some slices of ham starting to cook, while at the same time he kept one eye on the coffee pot so that the contents should not boil over.

"Why, it isn't milk at all, but the thickest of yellow cream she filled the jar with!" exclaimed the other, with boyish enthusiasm. "I tell you it'll make our coffee go fine, tho."

Tom also chuckled, for he was very fond of having cream with anything.

"Which goes to prove the truth of that old saying about the bread you cast upon the waters coming back to you later on," he observed; "only in this case it's not bread at all, but cream."

So the preparations went on apace, and that immediate vicinity soon became filled with aromatic odors that further tickled the appetites of the campers. Tom had made out to put on a bountiful supply of everything, under the belief that they were apt to have company drop in on them; for no one could fail to see their bright beacon fire in passing.

It turned out just that way, for before supper was quite ready a man and a woman hove in sight. They looked rather forlorn, and it could be easily seen that the couple must be among those hapless ones whose all had been swept away since morning by the greedy flood.

Wally jumped up immediately when he discovered their presence, and invited them to sit down and have a cup of coffee, which he promised them would be "ready in a jiffy." Eagerly did the man and his wife accept the cordial invitation. Perhaps the world might seem a bit less dreary after they had partaken of a hot cup of the cheering liquid, the odor of which promised a treat. So Wally made them comfortable, and then engaged them in conversation while Tom hurried up supper.

Just as he anticipated, Wally learned that they were former residents of the ill-fated Happy Valley, and knew the Saunders family very well. They had managed to carry some of their best goods to high ground, but their house and all of the rest of their worldly possessions had been carried off, and utterly lost.

It seeemed that they were now on their way to the house of friends further down the road, in the hope and expectation that they would find a welcome and shelter temporarily, until they could shape their future plans.

The boys pressed food as well as warm drink upon them, for they saw that both of the homeless ones were hungry. The hearty meal raised their spirits wonderfully, because a full stomach is one of the best of remedies to chase the blues away.

They said they must be going on after eating, because they had some distance to travel, and hoped to reach their haven of refuge before midnight arrived. And as they thanked the two boys there were tears in their eyes; so that both Tom and Wally felt they had been well repaid for what little trouble they had gone to on their account.

"Only too glad we've had a chance to help you out a bit, friends," Wally told them, when shaking hands at parting.

"We're standing ready to repeat the job if any other sufferers from the flood happen to pass along this way tonight," asserted Tom, secure in the belief that they had an abundance of eatables in their stores, and that there was no danger of a famine in that line overtaking them.

They sat up quite late talking, for there were many things of interest which they wished to discuss. Tom, of course, was wild to know how his one particular picture was going to turn out; but he did not mean to attempt to develop it himself. It was too precious to take any chances with. His previous experiment assured him that he was working the camera right in order to obtain the best results, and with that he must be content for the present.

Sure enough, they did have another lot of visitors. Along about 9 o'clock the sound of voices, and what seemed to be a child sobbing, reached them. Both boys sat up at once.

"Somebody on the road, and coming this way," announced Tom.

"We'll hail them and see if we can be of any help," Wally was saying.

The sounds drew nearer. They heard a woman's voice trying to appease the whining child. Then out of the darkness came a little group. The boys felt their hearts filled with pity at sight of them, for they looked very forlorn—a weary woman leading a little boy of about 4, while a man staggered along with a baby held in his arms, besides a bundle of clothes. Even the poor woman was carrying an old bag that was doubtless also filled with such garments as they had been able to save from the hungry maw of the flood.

Wally hurried to meet and greet the sad-looking group.

"Come right over to our fire and we'll fix up some supper for you all," he electrified them by saying cheerfully.

Of course they could not dream of saying "no," for beggars must not be choosers, and when a terrible disaster falls upon a community such a thing as pride takes its departure.

Gladly, then, did the man and his tired wife accept the invitation. The child also ceased crying and began to watch the operation of getting a second supper ready with eager curiosity and hope. And it was not long before again that wonderfully invigorating odor of frying ham and boiling coffee began to fill the immediate vicinity.

Tom hurried things along, and before a great while had elapsed he was helping the new lot of guests to a share in the supper, to which they promised to do full justice.

While they were eating the boys got

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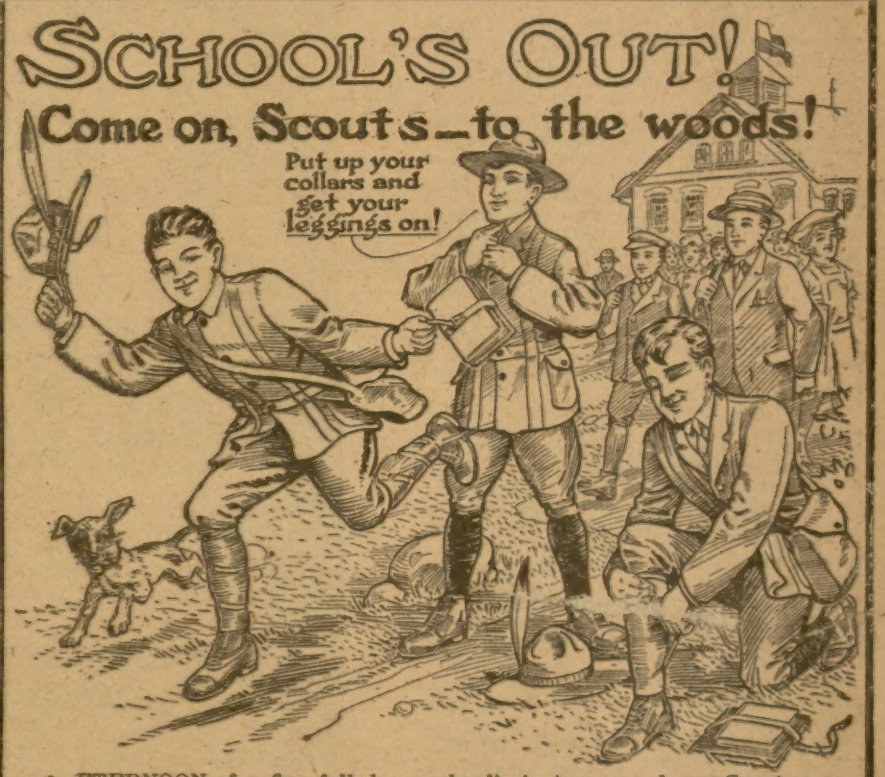

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together at some little distance away from the fire, thinking it hardly the thing to hang around and watch the others.

"They're all hungry as wolves," was the way Tom put it, "and worn to a frazzle worrying over things in the bargain. Besides, there was something I wanted to consult you about, Wally."

"I reckon I could give a pretty close guess as to what it's going to be," chuckled the other, who knew Tom's nature thru long association. "You're figuring on asking them to spend the rest of the night here alongside our fire; and in the morning we can take them a little way on the road, at least as far as Alec's relatives' house."

"Yes, and I'm sure you've been thinking that same thing over yourself," declared Tom, "or you'd never have hit it so easily. But those poor people are dead tired, Wally, and it'd be a burning shame to let them trudge any further. I'm perfectly willing to donate my blanket to the woman and the baby for this special occasion; and I know you wouldn't hold back from letting the kid have yours."

"That's right, Tom, the little chap is welcome to anything I've got. It must be awful tough to lose all you have in the world, and in such a tragic way in the bargain.

"Oh! but didn't you hear the woman say she was thankful for their lives—that they were still young, and could build up a home again, whereas nothing could bring back the baby, or little Benjie if one of them had been taken. That's the right sort of way to look at things when any calamity comes along. For one, I've learned my little lesson; and after this you won't hear me complaining so much.'

"As if you ever did complain," said Wally, indignantly; "why, I've always said you were the most patient sort of fellow I ever knew."

"Oh, well, I mayn't have said much,' admitted Tom, penitently, "but I've thought a heap sometimes, and I'm ashamed of it now. But is it all right about asking them to keep us company until morning? We can give them a good breakfast that will help carry them on their way. And that baby interests me considerably, it's such a jolly little thing. A baby don't understand what a flood means, [illegible] as it has something [illegible] once in so often it laughs and crows as if perfectly contented."

"Do just what you think best, Tom, and I'm with you to the limit," said Wally.

So it came about that when the man and his wife, together with the boy, had finished eating and were trying to express the gratitude they felt, Tom explained to them how he and his chum would not hear of their continuing their journey that night, when in such a fatigued condition.

We can make you fairly comfortable here, and give you a hearty breakfast in the bargain, to all of which you will be as welcome as the flowers in May," he told them, at which they exchanged pleased looks, while tears came into the poor woman's eyes as she seized Tom's hand, and before he could divine her intention pressed it to her lips. Tom felt a lump rise in his throat then that really threatened to choke him.

Gladly did the boys arrange their blankets for the couple, the man remarking that he would take the little chap with him. When the woman began to make objections, and say something about not wishing to rob their benefactors of their blankets, I am afraid Tom managed to make out, without actually saying so, that it did not matter, as he and his friend delighted to lie near a campfire without any covering, since they were trying to harden themselves to exposure in that way, for certain reasons of their own. And under the circumstances it can be safely assumed that Tom's little deceit would be forgiven by the recording angel above, who could see into the heart of a boy, and understood the generous motives actuating his conduct.

This would mean that they must keep some sort of blaze going thru the entire night, since it was apt to grow pretty cool along in the early morning hours. So the boys proceeded to busy themselves in gathering a supply of firewood, in order that they might not be compelled to hunt around from time to time while the darkness lasted.

Those fugitives of the flood must have felt that they were much more fortunate than many other refugees, who during those hours of the first night after the calamity had neither a fire to warm them nor food to appease their clamorous appetites. And likely enough their benefactors would not soon be forgotten, for at such times acts of kindness sink in deeply.

It was a long night. Perhaps the fact that they had to keep watch over the fire every hour of the time, and thus were prevented from any protracted lapses of sleep had more or less to do with this. Still not once did either of them feel the slightest regret over giving up their blankets. They gloated over the fact that the woman and the boy slept thru the entire night without awakening; and that the man also secured considerable sleep; tho once or twice he was up to look after the fire, as tho anxious to show how really grateful he felt.

Then came the morning, peeping shyly over the hills. It would be a sad day for many of those unfortunate folks whose all had been swept away with the angry waters, and who possibly faced conditions which they had not known for years. But the two motion picture lads, at least, gave thanks when they saw no cloud marring the clear heavens; for they believed there would be much work for them to do before the setting of another sun, and in order to get good results the best of light was necessary.

The preparations were soon under way looking to a breakfast for the crowd.

The conclusion of this interesting story will be found in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. Read them sure.

DIA-BUTSU—A golden Japanese idol which weighs over a million pounds. Two miles out from Kamakura, and about twenty miles from Yokohama, Japan, on a terrace near the temple of Kamakura, sits this, the most gigantic idol or heathen god now known to exist. This immense brazen image of a deity was built or made during the reign of Shomu, who was forty-sixth in the present line of emperors, and who died in the year 748 A. D. This idol, which has been prayed to daily for more than twelve hundred years by the crowd of devotees that early clustered about it, is still in perfect repair, and justly reckoned as one of the greatest wonders in the Orient. The dimensions of the god are truly colossal. The image weighs about four hundred and fifty tons, and is made of a combination of gold, tin, copper and mercury, in these proportions: Gold, five hundred pounds; tin, sixteen thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven pounds; mercury, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-four pounds; copper, nine hundred and eighty-six thousand and eighty pounds; a total of one million five thousand three hundred and sixty-one pounds. All other existing colossal images are pygmies compared with Dia-Butsu, whose hard visaged face has looked down on the meaningless rites of heathen idolators for more than twelve centuries.

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Home and Health

FASHION NOTES.

The one-color hat is smartest.

The dark blue serge dress has a wide, fluttering sash of dark blue mousseline de soie.

The most charming of all clothes for tiny girls are fine little smocks of handkerchief linen with smocking on front and sleeves.

In Paris they are wearing nothing but satin for the stand-by silk frock. And the satin is black, dark blue or white. This ought to be a good style tip for us, if we are thinking of new silks for fall. There is also something of a vogue for serge in khaki color.

Such a cute little tam can be made by joining a two-inch heavy grosgrain ribbon into the proper shape. The best way to do this is to use a band of buckram in the correct head size for the foundation and cut a pattern from old muslin or tissue paper over which you can build your ribbon tam. By shirring the second row of ribbon into the one that covers the band you get fullness enough for the under side of the tam. The upper ribbon of the brim is joined without fullness to this one, and the rest of the top is shirred row by row, decreasing accordingly.

For evening the smartest thing is the strapped slipper of brocaded silk (generally yellow and white), or else the slipper is laced across with ribbons, then wound about the leg above the ankle, filet fashion. Some of the best bootmakers show the little old-fashioned slipper, cut low with just one strip over or above the instep. This is for afternoon and evening wear, for it is equally pretty in black calf and white satin. Over toes is a tiny chou of satin or leather. This model is extremely simple in keeping with clothes, and it will be in fashion for a long time.

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

Inkstains on boards may be removed by vinegar or salts of lemon.

A fine grater is better than a knife for removing the surface of anything that is burned.

Crumpled tissue paper is one of the best things for polishing mirrors and glass of all sorts after washing.

Do not take time to grate chocolate; put the bars in the saucepan and place over the top of the kettle until melted.

If a tack has been driven far into a floor and is too rusty to get out easily, it can be removed more easily if a drop of oil is poured on it.

Silk frocks, silk shirts and so forth, says a laundry expert, may be washed in lukewarm water and pure white soap. Borax and ammonia will make white silk yellow.

HEALTH NOTES.

Eggs are considered one of the best remedies for dysentery. Beaten up slightly, with or without sugar, they tend by reason of their emollient qualities to lessen the inflammation of the stomach and intestines and form a transient coating on these organs.

Neuralgia is relieved sometimes by applying a bag of hot salt, and it will relieve earache sometimes.

Swimming is one of the greatest aids to beauty that a woman can have. It develops the entire muscular system evenly, no part suffering neglect at the expense of the other; therefore the body is developed harmoniously and uniformly.

There is no drink more wholesome than buttermilk. The late famous Metchinikoff attributed the health and long life of Bulgarian peasantry to their diet of sour milk and black bread. Cold bonny-clabber or junket is a delicious dish on a warm day, and with golden-brown bread, fresh butter and a crisp green salad constitutes a meal fit for the gods. Those who do not care for turned or buttermilk should remember cottage cheese. It is one of the most wholesome, most simple and most neglected of foods; seasoned to taste with salt and leek, it should recommend itself to any palate. Leek is one of the articles of diet containing a high percentage of iodine.

RECIPES.

JUMBALAYS—After washing one cupful of rice, let it soak one hour. Cut up a cold roast chicken and a slice of lean ham and fry them in a tablespoonful of lard. Stir in the rice slowly; while stirring add one pint of hot water. Cover closely and let simmer until the rice is nearly dry. A couple of spoonfuls of tomato may be added if the flavor is desired.

ORANGE CHARLOTTE—Make a jelly of one-third box of gelatin soaked in one-third cup cold water, add one-third cup boiling water, one sugar, juice and pulp of oranges to make one cup, juice of one lemon. Bring to a boil; when quite cold and nearly stiff add beaten whites of three eggs. Beat all with egg beater and pile up in the center of a dish edged with lady fingers.

SOUP WITH BREAD CRUMBS—One quart skim milk, one cup bread crumbs or two large slices stale bread, salt, small amount spinach or outer leaves lettuce (not more than four ounces), one small slice onion. Cut the vegetables into small pieces and cook with the bread crumbs in the milk in a double boiler. If a large quantity is being prepared, as in a school lunchroom, for example, put the vegetables thru a meat chopper. In this case slices of bread may be ground with the vegetables in order to absorb the juice.

NOTES FOR KNITTERS.

To look at the number of knitting classes and the impromptu porch lessons in knitting it would seem that everybody was either knitting or learning to knit. In this busy season of sweater-making and Red Cross work many of the fine points of the art are apt to be neglected. An old and experienced knitter gives the following points which the beginner should keep in mind and practice for progress.

Select a chair without arms or else very low ones, because any impediment in the way of the arms means restricted and hence uneven knitting.

Some knitters advise knitting the first row slowly until the needles fill with stitches and the work can then go on more quickly. Others say that it is a good idea to set a speed from the beginning as it makes the work look more even. This is something each beginner will have to find out for herself.

Never let the needle support the weight of a piece of work. This drags the work and stretches the garment terribly.

Beginners should learn to count stitches occasionally to make sure that none of them have been dropped.

Be very careful not to pick up a split thread. Make every stitch as clean as possible.

To remedy a dropped stitch in plain "garter stitch" knitting, draw the straight thread thru the loose loop from the back. This can be done best with a crochet hook.

As the "split" stitch sometimes catches up more than the single thread, this often accounts for extra stitches.

Aim to keep the tension fairly loose and easy. The experienced knitter will know that work which she can move easily along her needle with one finger is just about the right tension. Loose knitting is especially good when as high as seventy or eighty stitches are held on the needle.

Try not to stop in the middle of a row. If you have to do so try to keep the needles flat together or the stopping place will be evident with a stretched place or hole.

Instead of knotting thread, the experienced worker runs the end of the old thread up thru the end of the new thread with a darning needle.

KEEP FOOD COOL AND CLEAN.

Keep perishable food cool, clean and covered, a United States Department of Agriculture bulletin admonishes.

The moment meat, fish, milk and eggs are allowed to get warm they begin to spoil.

Bacteria and germs multiply rapidly in slightly warm food, and quickly make it dangerous or unfit to eat.

Keep perishable foods in the coolest, cleanest place you can provide, preferably in a good refrigerator or icehouse, but, at any rate, in covered vessels suspended in the well, or in the coolest clean place in your home or cellar.

Do not keep perishable foods in a hot kitchen or pantry or in a sunny place a moment longer than is necessary.

Dry cold is a better preservative than damp cold.

The dust particles in the air carry mold and germs.

Meat, fish and milk are ideal breeding grounds for such germs. Keep your food covered, so that these bacteria and germs will have as little chance as possible to get on your food.

Ordinary cleanliness demands that flies be kept out of homes and away from food. Health protection makes it essential to banish flies. Keep all food covered, or at least screened from these carriers of disease. Destroy flies by every possible means.

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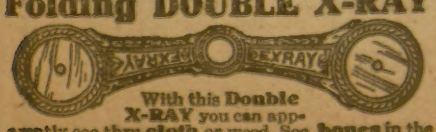

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